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ELECTRONIC GAMES

VIDEO GAMES • COMPUTER GAMES • MULTI-MEDIA GAMES • PORTABLE GAMES • ARCADES

3DO
PREVIEWS OF
THE FIRST GAMES!

08

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TOONS TO CARTS
YOU AIN'T NEVER SEEN GAMES LIKE THESE!

NIGEL BEATS MARIO*

*Mario Andretti

When Nigel Mansell entered the world of Indy car racing, he knew his biggest competition would be Mario (the driver, not the plumber). In his debut Indy car race in Australia, Mansell stunned the racing world by upsetting Andretti, and capturing the checkered flag. Now you can relive Mansell's march to the Formula One crown with Gametek's NIGEL MANSELL'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACING. Every other racing game for the Super Nintendo is left eating dust. No other racing game puts you in the driver's seat like Nigel. Featuring a first-person hands on perspective, 16-International Formula One race tracks, totally customizable Formula One cars, randomized weather conditions and even audible hints from the man himself, Nigel Mansell. So, see for yourself why reviewers are calling Nigel Mansell the best racing game ever available for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System.

Nigel Mansell's World Championship
R A C I N G

from

GAMETEK®

Drive it Home.

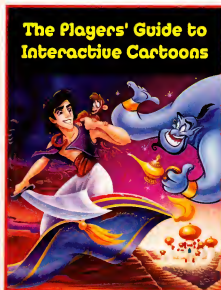Game Hint and Tip Line: 1-900-903-GAME (4263)
• 80¢ per minute charge • Touch tone phone required • Minors must have parental permission before calling • Available 24 hours

INSIDE EG

The Players' Guide to Interactive Cartoons

Video cartoon capers
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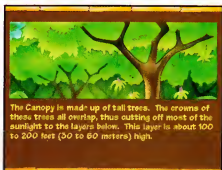
3DO gathers momentum
Page — 48

The Canopy is made up of tall trees. The crowns of these trees all overlap, thus cutting off most of the sunlight to the layers below. This layer is about 100 to 200 feet (30 to 60 meters) high.

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FEATURES

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Why just watch or read cartoons when you can live them? This blockbuster section takes you behind the scenes to meet the designers and developers, and to get reactions to the games from some of the biggest names in animation and comics. 37

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• **EG Bids on Bridge Games**
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TWO POWERFUL BROTHERS,
TWO DEADLY ARMIES,
ONE SURVIVOR.

1 OR 2 PLAYERS!
ARCADE ACTION!
INTENSE STRATEGY!

A GAMING EXPERIENCE ONLY POSSIBLE ON CD.

TURBO-CD, THAT IS.

POWER ON!

The Games, They Are a-Changin'

Please welcome a new phrase to the pages of **Electronic Games**: "Digital Highway." Might as well get used to it, because it looks like it's going to stick around awhile.

We are in the midst of the greatest upheaval in electronic gaming since Nintendo introduced the 8-Bit video game console. Except this is bigger.

The mergers, buy-outs, and strategic alliances are splashed across the business pages of the daily newspapers. You've been reading the behind-the-scenes details about them in **Electronic Games**. You'll find a lot more information in this issue's *Hotline*, and brace yourself for more bombshells in coming months.

The recent Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago crystallized electronic gaming trends that have been building since the mid-1980s. Interactive electronic entertainment has joined the entertainment industry. While the actual transformation is sure to be gradual, stretching over many years, this is when it turned the corner.

Revolution is in the air.

Electronic gaming will never be the same again.

The Digital Highway is a metaphor for the interlocking electronic system that could be here before the end of the decade. An electronic network will connect providers of software with every home in the U.S.

Communications giants like AT&T are paving the digital highway with a mixture of computer, fibre optic and satellite technology. Once information traffic gets rolling down these electronic roads, software publishers can sell or rent movies, special events, and electronic games directly to end users. That means no warehouses or retail outlets. In fact, the digital highway eliminates physical handling of *all* forms of electronic software, from games to laser disks. Fancy packaging and thick instruction books are also likely casualties of this direct connection between game companies and game players.

The Digital Highway is a toll road. You'll have to pay for everything you get, either a flat monthly fee for a service such as the Sega Network, or a per-title charge as with current pay-per-view attractions. Gamers probably won't mind too much, though, because publishers will pass along some of their tremendous savings in the form of significantly lower prices. Without middle men, packaging, and distribution costs to inflate the price, today's $49.95 cart could sell for as little as $10 when it comes down the wire to you.

The cartridge rental business doesn't have a bright future at the moment. One leading rental chain is developing plans for everything from indoor play parks for children to electronic amusement centers in preparation for the day when downloads replace rentals.

The Digital Highway has the power to transform our hobby into a mass market phenomenon, like movies, records, and cable television. The coming integration of the entertainment software delivery system will be mirrored in the closer connections among segments of the electronic entertainment world. That's why Paramount, Disney, Viacom, New Line Cinema, and similar companies have suddenly decided that it's time to get into gaming. They foresee a near future in which properties are routinely cross-collateralized across the full spectrum of software.

Electronic Games isn't just hangin' out at curbside, either. As regular readers know, we never stop fine tuning this magazine, and you can look for more changes in months to come. Our goal is to insure that **EG** continues to provide the ultimate in comprehensive coverage, in-depth analysis and uncompromising critiques that will help you spend your time and money wisely in an age of expanding choices and multiplying entertainment options.

Let's hit the highway. Travel is always more fun when you're with friends.

— *Arnie Katz*

IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT…
GO BACK TO CARTRIDGE GAMES!
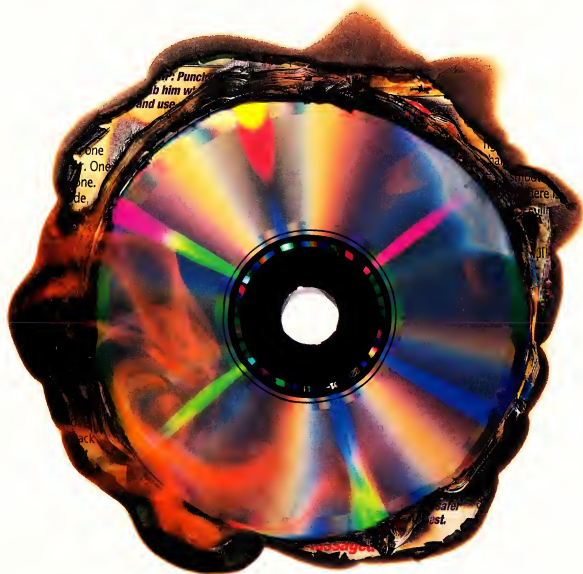
ROBO ALESTE

SCORCHING ACTION FOR THE SEGA CD.
COMING IN AUGUST 1993.
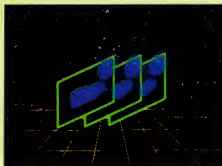
FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

Not So Cheap Shots

I have always looked up to Nintendo for having advertisements that don't throw punches at their competitors. I have always felt that it was cheap of Sega to mention Nintendo or hint at Nintendo in a negative way in their marketing plan. Nintendo has shown in the past their ability to ignore these cheap shots and indirectly get back at Sega by producing excellent games. This made me think that Nintendo had a policy against mentioning the competition in their ads. I just found out that I was wrong. Does this sound familiar: "Why go to the next level when you could go light-years beyond?" That is a quote from one of Nintendo's **Star Fox** commercials. It almost clearly attacks Sega's "Welcome to the Next Level" campaign. Sure, the game is a blast, but was this necessary? Is Nintendo now afraid of being a *fair* player in this competition for 16-Bit supremacy? Why can't we all be nice and love each other?

Paul Andrews
W. Townsend, MA

Competitive advertising has been a factor in gaming advertising as well as in ads for aspirin and soft drinks for a long time, Paul, and it can range from virulent attacks to comparatively gentle ribs like the one you quote. When Nintendo has something like an 80-to-90 percent share of the video game market, as it did for the 8-Bit machines, it had no need nor desire to call attention to Sega or other systems. Fairness had nothing to do with it. Now that 16-Bit systems are facing real competitive market shares, and with multi-millions of dollars at stake, such attitudes are changing. We, as individuals, can and should "be nice and love each other," but it would appear billion-dollar corporations can't afford to. If they do, the sales will often suffer.

CD Thoughts

All too often a prozine will harp and harp on something that is nothing more than hype. **EG** stands above this.

Nowhere else did I read anyone giving their doubts about the Sega CD, especially during 1992 when it was finally released. I didn't agree with your reservations about this system at the time.

To my mild surprise, I've found myself coming around to your point of view. I was one of those people who rushed out and bought the Sega CD the minute it came out. It was without a doubt the most incredible thing I had ever seen. The possibilities of CD seemed endless, and I could only imagine what Sega would do with it. Unfortunately, they have done almost nothing. It's been six months since it arrived, and only a dozen games are available. That wouldn't bother me if the games were revolutionary, but they have been, with a couple of exceptions, disappointments. They are either cartridge games with merely new music, a short cartoon and maybe one or two new levels [**Hook, Chuck Rock, Sol-Feace**], laser disk games that give me as much control over my environment as the government does [**Cobra Command, Road Avenger, Time Gal**], motion-video games that were really made years ago [**Sewer Shark, Night Trap**], and these oddball things that can't even be classified as games, or even entertainment [**Make Your Own Music Videos**]. Other than **Sherlock Holmes** and **Wonder Dog**, I haven't played any Sega CDs that are all that impressive. Looking at the new software, it seems to be flooded with more of the same; games that don't use the scaling and rotation effects of the hardware, or games that don't even scratch the surface of CD memory. Consumers are short on cash as it is, and we don't have hundreds of dollars to spend on a system that offers nothing different than what's already available. CD-ROM could fail as a video game medium. If Sega fails with CD, after NEC already has, it's unlikely Nintendo will introduce their own CD system in a market that has such an uncertain future.

Dan Thomas MacInnes
Duluth, MN

By the end of this year, Sega anticipates having 19 CD games of their own available in the marketplace, not counting third-party introductions. Top-quality CD games that take advantage of all the bells and whistles available take more time to produce than standard video games (which aren't done overnight, either, Dan—at least, not the good ones), and it would appear that many of the duds and reruns you complain about were inserted to fill the gap while the rest were in preparation. That's an explanation, not an excuse. Meanwhile, the CD market is evolving, and we are seeing many advance notices of games slated for the Sega CD as well as computer and black box (3DO) technologies.

Reading the Fine Print

I don't know whether it's an April Fools joke or if I will win anything, but I certainly bother to read every word of your delightful magazine, and believe me, it's worth it! It's the only magazine that takes gaming seriously; there is nothing like it out there!

Dan Laufer
Raanana, Israel

...and...

I am one of the six people who read that very small paragraph at the bottom of page 4 and I would like to say that I would love some sort of contest. That would be great, after all we deserve something for reading every little word...

April Rodde
Peoria, IL

You along with all the others should be advised that while none of our readership can be construed as foolish (April or otherwise), the reality of any contests in connection with those tiny texts remains under advisement. All responses to our call are being held on file, however, just in case!

Keep your cards and letters coming, to:

Feedback, c/o Electronic Games
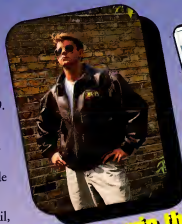**330 S. Decatur, #152**
Las Vegas, NV 89107

EG HOTLINE

Sony Buys Psygnosis

Sony Electronic Publishing Company acquired Psygnosis Ltd., the Liverpool, England-based computer game publisher (**Lemmings**, **Shadow of the Beast**) and developer of Sega CD titles such as **Bram Stoker's Dracula** and **Last Action Hero**, marketed under the Sony Imagesoft label.

Psygnosis will continue to use its label on computer software and develop software for Sony Imagesoft, but it will also serve as the foundation for Sony's new European management operation.

Kidder Tends Bar In CD Thriller

Access is going for star power in its forth-coming CD-ROM thriller. The company cast

Margot Kidder as a bartender in **Under a Killing Moon**, the new Tex Murphy adventure due for release in January, '93. Kid-

der will also appear in the condensed version on disk which is scheduled for about three months later.

The graphic-rich detective story is a gritty tale of murder and mayhem starting in San Francisco and leading the player through panoramic sequences that use cinematic techniques to take the tale through far-flung locales.

Sega To Test Game Channel

Initial testing of the Sega Channel (*Hotline*, July **EG**) is scheduled to begin this fall in 13 local cable markets, making it available to approximately 350,000 cable subscribers. The Sega Channel, a joint venture of Sega of America, Inc., Time Warner Entertainment and Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI), will require a special tuner/decoder cartridge for the Sega Genesis, connected to the TV cable. Reportedly, games of up to 12 megabits can be downloaded from a menu of up to 100, and will play identically to their cartridge versions.

Test markets are in areas where Time Warner and TCI currently operate cable systems; plans are for the premium channel to be available to all cable system operators by early 1994, priced in the range of most premium or pay-cable subscription services.

"In the U.S., video games are a $6 billion industry that is currently untapped by the cable industry," said Stanley B. Thomas Jr., recently named president and CEO of the Sega Channel. "We see this as an opportunity to merge two rapidly growing areas of home entertainment."

Aero Swings To Genesis, SNES

Aero the Acrobat will be leaping onto SNES and Genesis game players this fall, and Sunsoft promises "an unprecedented 3-D effect that is life-
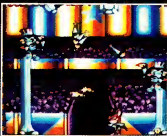
Aero the Acrobat wil soon be flying with SNES and Genesis.

like."The company expects to make Aero their mascot.

The game involves Aero's attempts to save the circus, while doing stunts like flips, flying, riding, diving and being shot from a cannon. It's big fun in the big top!

Cubic Twist: Play the Box

EG's pick as the most innovative package at Chicago's Summer CES is the puzzle-cube container for the MPC CD-ROM game **Video Cube: Space**, by Aris Entertainment. The 5.75" x 5.75" box is in a 4 x 4-piece configuration that, once the CD is removed, can be turned and unfolded indefinitely in several ways. It complements the game's animated cubes, which resemble illustrated Rubik's Cubes tumbling through space. In these, when the sides are unscrambled, it plays out one of 126

Microsoft Video for Windows videos of the space effort or satellite views. Distributed by Electronic Arts, **Space** is the first of a planned series of **Video Cube** titles. EA is also handling Aris' **e-World** series of interactive movies, beginning with **Alternating Currents**, in which the player leads Billy Baxter through his life, meeting success or failure depending on the choices made.

Paramount Turns Interactive

Here's yet another example of movie makers coming into the software biz. Paramount Communications, parent to Paramount Pictures, Paramount Television and other entertainment divisions, formed a new unit, Paramount Interactive, to develop multimedia products. The company will

Paramount Interactive

have access to Paramount's library of entertainment products and other publishing resources.

Characters from the Richard Scarry books are now on PCs.

The first product from the new software company is **Busytown**, based on *The Busy World of Richard Scarry*. The child visits 12 playgrounds (the beach, a park, a deli, a gas station, etc), each with many activities, and 13 original songs. The game, developed by NovaTrade, will be available for DOS and MAC CD-ROM, and there will be a 3DO version later this year.

Other works in progress are **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine**, **Madison Square Garden**, and **Lenny's Room** (a children's musical adventure.)

White Men Can't Jump In Carts Either

Trimark Interactive will bring *White Men Can't Jump*, the film starring Woody Harrelson and Wesley Snipes as basketball-

playing con artists, to the video game screen as the result of a license agreement with Twentieth Century Fox. Trimark Interactive is a newly formed subsidiary of Trimark Holdings, Inc., which also operates Trimark Pictures and Trimark Television.

Kelly Flock, Trimark Interactive's executive vice president, said, "Most successful video games are licensed from the film industry. While we're in active negotiation and production on several fronts, we are delighted that **White Men Can't Jump** will be one of our first releases."

Although rights were acquired for development of the film license on all platforms, Flock indicated, "Our stated goal for Trimark Interactive is to begin distributing 4-6 games for the Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo consoles over the next 12 months."

Pad Preprogrammed With Multi-Moves

STD Entertainment has taken another step toward automating game play. The SN ProgramPad by STD is pre-programmed with 29 multi-combination moves for **Street Fighter II** and **Fatal Fury** on the SNES. It also uses codes that allow gamers using the same characters to fight each other. Players may program six moves for other games as well.

The STD SN ProgramPad will allow players total control.

Other features include auto-fire, variable slow motion and an LCD screen. A Genesis controller, the SG ProgramPad, is available, but not yet in a pre-programmed version.

Bignet Goes To Extreme

Bignet U.S.A., Inc., creator of **Warrior of Rome** and **Heavy Nova** (Genesis), **Black Hole Assault** (Sega CD) and some Game Gear titles, changed its name to Extreme Entertainment Group, Inc. Still a wholly-owned subsidiary of Micronet Co., Ltd., of Japan, Extreme intends to expand to other platforms, such as the SNES and 3DO, under the leadership of video game veteran Denny Thorley.

Upcoming titles include **Battletech** for the Genesis and Sega CD, **Choplifter II** and **Riddick Bowe Boxing** (SNES).

IBM, EA Create Family Computer

A 486SX computer package with Super VGA color monitor, sound system and modem, pre-loaded with educational and other software for children, is offered by IBM's EduQuest company, Electronic Arts' EA*Kids division and Futurekids, the LA-based computer school chain. Described as a turn-key hardware, software and training solution, the EduQuest Forty Family Package is priced at $1,999.

Mortal Kombat Fans Get The Pit

Acclaim is publishing *The Pit*, a free newsletter on the development of **Mortal Kombat** prior to its release for the SNES, Genesis, Game Boy and Game Gear on "Mortal Monday" in September.

Interested fans can get updates, character pro-

files, answers to frequently asked questions, and opportunities to buy game-related merchandise by sending their name, address, age and which hardware system they own to: *The Pit*, P.O. Box 9005, Oyster Bay, NY 11771.

Kirby Sets NES MEG Record

Balloon-shaped Kirby, introduced in **Kirby's Dream Land** for the Game Boy, moved to the 8-Bit NES in **Kirby's Adventure**. At 6 megabits, it is said to have the largest memory of any NES title, and up to three games can be saved with built-in battery backup.
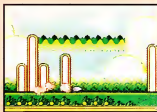
Epyx Games On FlightLink Planes

Frequent flyers on USAir and Continental can soon play Epyx' games **Cascade**, **Stuff the Briefcase**, **Word Salad**, **Dominos** or **Solitaire** thanks to an arrangement between Epyx and In-Flight Phone Corp. (IFPC).

During the FlightLink in-air tests, the game selection was limited to tic-tac-toe, a *Star Wars* type game, a version of reversi and some others, all on a monochrome LCD screen. Now FlightLink is being installed on 402 planes for USAir and 60 for Continental Airlines, and VGA resolution color screens will replace the LCD screens. Games are the second most popular activity on the FlightLink service, according to IFPC. Only actual phone communication beats them out.

EA Sports Signs Bill Walsh

Bill Walsh, head coach for Stanford University Cardinals, is collaborating with EA Sports on **Bill Walsh College Football** for the Genesis. "Walsh's reputation and focus on teaching were important to us," said Scott Orr, executive producer for EA Sports. "We want **Col-**

Bill Walsh's College Football fuels college gridiron action.

lege Football and future EA Sports games to teach kids about sports as well as be a lot of fun to play."

Scheduled for an August release, the game is designed so that players will be able to study Walsh's strategies and apply them against 48 of the best college teams.

Sega Games Age-Rated

Sega of America is rating its new games in three classifications: GA (general audiences), MA-13 for teens (mature audiences, parental discretion advised) and MA-17 for adults (not appropriate for minors). An executive advisory council will set ratings for each game based on three sets of criteria: 1) the basic premise and rules of play, 2) graphical depictions of the characters and background scenes, and 3) the audio content. CEO Tom Kalinske noted that as video games increase in popularity with adults as well as children, "video games are being developed to appeal to different age groups. We are particularly concerned that parents buy games appropriate for their child's age."

Nintendo spokesmen reportedly denounced the move as an attempt to justify the marketing of increasingly violent games. Sega's announcement coincided with a British ban of sales of **Night Trap**, which contains scenes of lifelike violence, to children under 15.

Broderbund Maps A New Route

Broderbund Software will distribute route-planning software created by British company NextBase Ltd., and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Automap Inc. of Bellevue, Wash. Under an affiliated label agreement, Broderbund will handle sales and distribution, while Automap will take care of technical support and product design as well as publishing and marketing. Automap recently announced its third version of Automap Road Atlas for DOS, a route-planning guide for North America including over 120,000 locations. Broderbund will initially distribute this and a Windows version, with a version for Macintosh due in the fall.

Sierra Builds Prodigy Gate

Prodigy Services Company, the family oriented on-line information service of IBM and Sears, and The Sierra Network (TSN), which provides interactive amusement on PCs and compatibles, signed an agreement to allow cross linking between the two operations.

For an additional charge over their usual basic rates, Prodigy members will be able to directly access a special version of TSN to play and interact with TSN members. As with TSN's recent association with AT&T, this will provide further resources for game development and other additional software to enhance the combined systems.

Sega Supports Kid's AIDS Concert

Sega of America joined Los Angeles radio station KIIS-FM for a fund-raiser concert for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation that raised pledges of close to $150,000. The second annual "KIIS and Unite" concert starred Patty Smyth, Nineh Cherry and other "Top-40 Superstars of '93," joined by Sonic the Hedgehog, Rick Dees and Brian Austin Green of *Beverly Hills 90210*, among others.

Auction items donated by top celebrities included a Fender guitar signed by members of

U2, a silver lamé stage costume from Rod Stewart, a jersey signed by Wayne Gretzky and signed artwork for Michael Jackson's *Dangerous* album.

Toolworks Makes Amazing Deal

Software Toolworks and Amazing Media have formed an alliance to create multimedia products. The first, **Space Shuttle**, will be ready in July. It lets the gamer train with astronauts then become a crew member in 50 or more missions.

Oceans Below is an underwater exploration and treasure hunt that takes a scuba diver through the oceans of the world.

The third product is **Capitol Hill**. It casts the gamer as a member of Congress, using video and still photography to give the experience of actually being in Washington DC.

All products wil be available for DOS and Mac CD-ROM, and will also be produced for 3DO.

Westwood Upgrades Kyrandia for CD

Owners of **Legend of Kyrandia** with a CD-ROM drive may upgrade the game to the CD version for $33.99 (includes S&H) and proof of purchase. Write to Virgin Games Customer Service, 18061 Fitch Ave., Irvine, CA 92714, and enclose your check and a photocopy of the original receipt, box or disk with the request. The CD-ROM edition includes spoken dialog and multilingual subtitles (French, German or English) at the player's option.

3DO Players Introduced

Unveiled at SCES, Panasonic FZ-1 REAL 3DO Interactive Multiplayer (left) is the first product from Panasonic's new Interactive Media Division. Sanyo Electric Co. Ltd., still in negotiations with The 3DO Company at press time, showed a prototype of the Sanyo 3DO Interactive Multiplayer (right).

PUGSLEY'S SCAVENGER HUNT.™

As if things weren't ooky enough! Now Pugsley Addams must go on a simply torturous scavenger hunt. There's all sorts of unnaturally delightful traps. And hidden switches all about, which produce the loveliest, blood-curdling effects when Pugsley runs into them. There's even magic money which has an extra lively effect you won't want to miss. So get ready to get spooky...and get set to get kooky...it's Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt! En garde!

Screen shots shown are from the Super NES version of the game.

The name of the game

Ocean

Ocean of America, Inc.
1855 O'Toole Ave., Suite D-102
San Jose, CA 95131

the Addams Family™

Nintendo
ENTERTAINMENT
SYSTEM®

SUPER NINTENDO

GAME BOY®

Mad Dog Rides Home Range

Draw, *hombre!* **Mad Dog McCree**, the live-action arcade game, arrived on CD-ROM for PCs courtesy American Laser Games (ALG) and EduQuest, IBM's CD-ROM publishing arm. Introduced at SCES in Chicago, additional versions for Sega CD and 3DO are also slated for release this summer.

ALG's plans for future

motion picture action arcade titles for home CD-ROM systems include **Mad Dog II: the Lost Gold**, the sequel; **Space Pirates**, outer space adventure; **Gallagher's Gallery**, featuring the watermelon-smashing comedian; **Who Shot Johnny Rock?**, a gangster-detective game, and **Crime Patrol**, a law enforcement simulation.

SFII: the Movie

Adding to their legendary conquests in arcades, vid game counters and merchandise shelves, the **StreetFighter II** team set its eyes on Hollywood. *StreetFighter II: The Movie* is expected to be ready for viewing in the autumn of 1994.

Capcom Co., Ltd., and the Edward R. Pressman Film Corp. (*Reversal of Fortune, Hoffa, Conan the Barbarian, Das Boot*, etc.) will join forces with writer-director Steven de Souza (*Die Hard* and *Die Hard 2, Commando*, etc.) to tell a

tough, action-filled story of **SFII**'s 12 martial artists in a hostage rescue situation. Starring roles are expected to be filled by unknowns drawn from the martial arts field.

Maxis Signs ScreenMagic

Maxis signed its first affiliation agreement, with ScreenMagic, Inc., to distribute its initial entertainment title, scheduled for late summer release.

"We are excited about the new partnership with Screen-Magic," said Jeff Braun, Maxis president, adding that "Screen-Magic's philosophy is similar to Maxis'—to produce software that allows users to be creative and to have fun."

ScreenMagic's first entertainment is **Doodle-mation**, a creativity package that helps users draw and cartoon.

Search for Stars In Return to Zork

Activision's **Return to Zork**, the long awaited graphic sequel to the text adventure series, is said to be the first
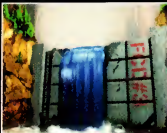
Remember Flood Control Dam #3? It's back in glorious color!

interactive adventure written, produced and performed by motion picture professionals.

The cast includes such actors as Jason Hervey (*The Wonder Years*), Robin Lively (*Doogie Howser, Twin Peaks*), and Sam Jones (*Flash Gordon*), in full motion video against computer-generated backgrounds.

It is scheduled for release this fall as an Infocom title on several CD-ROM formats and other platforms.

Play Freely With Mouseman Cordless

Logitech's latest Mouseman is designed especially for additional freedom of movement. The Mouseman Cordless is said to provide improved long-term comfort, accuracy and control.
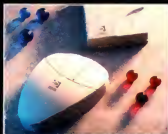
Users who get tired of tangles will enjoy a cordless mouse.

The $149 set's low-frequency radio technology allows control out of line-of-sight up to six feet away, while the software lets the user change button assignments and adjust cursor tracking, size and speed.

Konami Builds U.S. R&D Center

Konami is building a facility in Illinois, to be a site for development of products especially slated for the American market. The Tokyo-based company expects to have the new center up and running in spring of 1994, and in the words of Susumu Sakamoto, president of Konami America, "...developing game titles that are on the cutting edge of technology and are perfectly suited to U.S. kids' gaming needs."

Ink Takes Pen To SimCity

A special edition of Maxis's **SimCity** has been developed for PenPoint mobile computers by Ink Development Corp. For release in late summer, the $69 adaptation lets the player use the computer pen to draw roads, train tracks and power lines or "tap" for residential areas and power plants, etc. Cities may be built from scratch, or the player may select one of eight pre-built cities and customize it with the included SimCity Terrain Editor and Graphics Sets.

PREPARE YOURSELF

RAYDEN

SUB-ZERO

LIU KANG

JOHNNY CAGE
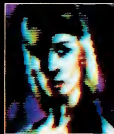
SONYA BLADE

KANO

GORO

SCORPION

MORTAL KOMBAT

COMING TO LEADING VIDEO GAME SYSTEMS

SEPTEMBER 93

EG Readers' Popularity Poll
July 1993

These games were voted the readers' favorites in EG's monthly poll. Duplicate numbers represent ties.

Favorite Video Games
1. *StarFox*, Nintendo
2. *Super Mario Kart*, Nintendo
3. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom

Favorite Computer Games
1. *Battle Chess*, Interplay

Favorite Multimedia Games
1. *Manhole*, Activision
1. *Stellar 7*, Dynamix
1. *Ys Quest*, TTI
1. *Sega Classics*, Sega
1. *Road Avenger*,

Favorite Coin-Op
1. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams

Duo Lands in Hobby Stores

The CD-ROM based Duo video game system is now being sold in hobby stores nationwide through an arrangement between Turbo Technologies, Inc. (TTI) and M.A.S. International Sales & Marketing, its exclusive representative to the Game Manufacturers Association hobby trade.

Originally called the Turbo Duo, the $299.99 system plays all of TTI's cartridge, CD and SuperCD games and, with the recently introduced Intelligent Link, can be used as a CD-ROM drive for personal computers.

Top Coin-Ops
June 1993

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos
1. *NBA Jam*, Williams
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Midway
3. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
4. *Super Chase*, Taito
5. *Street fighter II CE*, Capcom

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6. *Fighter's History*, Data East
7. *Terminator 2*, Midway
8. *Golden Axe II*, Sega
9. *Final Lap 3*, Namco
10. *Double Axle*, Taito

Best Deluxe Videos
1. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
2. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
3. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
4. *Final Lap 2*, Namco
5. *Race Drivin'*, Atari
6. *X-Men*, Konami
7. *Galaxy Force*, Sega
8. *Steel Talons*, Atari
9. *Mad Dog II*, ALG
10. *Moto Frenzy*, Atari

Best Coin-Op Software
1. *Street Fighter II C.E.Turbo*, Capcom
2. *World Heroes 2*, SNK
3. *Time Killers*, Strata
4. *C.O.W./Moo Mesa*, Konami
5. *In The Hunt*, Irem
6. *Warriors of Fate*, Capcom
7. *Neck N' Neck*, Bundra
8. *3 Count Bout*, SNK
9. *Cadillacs & Dinos*, Capcom
10. *Fatal Fury 2*, SNK

Best Pinball Machines
1. *Twilight Zone*, Williams
2. *Addams Family*, Midway
3. *Street Fighter II*, Gottlieb/Premier
4. *Dracula*, Williams
5. *White Water*, Williams
6. *Creature/Lagoon*, Midway
7. *Rocky/Bullwinkle*, Data East
8. *Star Wars*, Data East
9. *Terminator 2*, Williams
10. *Fish Tales*, Williams

Top Selling Software
May 1993

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Wash., DC., based on units sold by ten retail chains, representing over 1300 stores.

TOP MS-DOS Games
1. *X-Wing*, Lucas Arts
2. *Alone in the Dark*, Interplay
3. *Empire Deluxe*, New World
4. *Space Quest V*, Sierra
5. *Ultrabots*, Nova Logic
6. *Wolfenstein 3-D/Spear of Destiny*, Formgen
7. *Tony LaRussa Baseball II*, SSI

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8. *Comanche: Maximum Overkill*, Nova Logic
9. *Ultima VII*, Origin
10. *Hardball III*, Accolade

Top CD-ROM Titles
1. *Compton's Encyclopedia Upgrade*, Compton's
2. *MPC Wizard*, Aris
3. *Street Atlas USA*, Delorme
4. *Cinemania*, Microsoft
5. *Battle Chess*, Interplay
6. *Mantis*, MicroProse
7. *World View*, Aris Entertainment
8. *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, LucasArts
9. *Key Clipmaster Pro*, SoftKey
10. *Grolier's Illustrated Ency clopedia*, Software Toolworks

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Nintendo Stats

Here's a record: Nintendo hit and passed sales of 750 million video game cartridges. In fact, the Big N has also sold 100 million *Mario* games in the past ten years, when you total all the platforms.

There are now 12.2 million GameBoys installed, and there will be 50 new GameBoy titles this year.

Nintendo's *StarFox* shipped one million copies in March, and Nintendo says that over 500,000 have already sold through.

Nintendo says that they have sold 8.6 million SNES machines.

Commodore to Enter 32-Bit Derby

Though the details haven't yet been announced, **Electronic Games** has received confirmation that Commodore plans to announce a 32-bit machine later this year.

Company spokesmen wouldn't comment on the specifics of the processor.

Modem-to-Modem in Delphi Game Room

Delphi opened the "Game Room," an area that supports games with direct modem play options. Members may use the on-line service's basic rates to play Masque's **ChessNet**, Micro-Prose's **Command HQ**, New World Computing's **Empire Deluxe**, QQP's **The Perfect General**, and shareware products.

Balance the Scales On Serpent Isle

Origin Systems issued *Balancing the Scales*, a clue book for the company's

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Ultima VII, Part 2: Serpent Isle. Treated as a first-person narrative, the $14.95 volume provides two independent walk-throughs—one for the player who just wants hints, the other providing specific details on the winning path.

In addition, *Balancing the Scales* includes a background of Serpent Isle history and philosophy, and information on its denizens, creatures and needed items.

Homey Plays MS-DOS

Capstone's **Homey D. Clown: The Computer Game With An Attitude** features

I don't think so!

Homey making his way through New York City.

The star of *In Living Color* must get through the subways, face security guards, and eventually reach the studios to audition for a show.

EGG-LAYING

EXTERMINATE DEADLY FACE-HUGGERS!

CHEST-BURSTING

CHEST BURSTING EXCITEMENT!

SCRAMBLE ALIEN EGGS!

ACID-SPITTING

FLESH-RIPPING EXOSKELETONS OVERHEAD!

ALIEN³™ ON SNES!™

Destroy every egg-laying, chest-bursting, acid-spitting xenomorph on the planet
with everything you've got... from a plasma rifle to a blow torch... or this nightmare will never end!

RED-HOT
ALIEN ACTION!
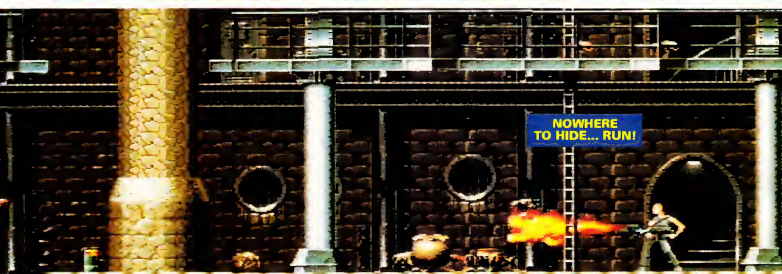
NOWHERE
TO HIDE... RUN!

ACID-SPITTING
ALIEN INVASION!

ALIEN 3

3 TIMES THE SUSPENSE
3 TIMES THE HORROR
3 TIMES THE DANGER

Top Video Games
As of May 17, 1993

The following figures are provided courtesy of Babbages.

Super NES
1. *StarFox*, Nintendo
2. *Batman Returns*, Konami
3. *Fatal Fury*, Takara
4. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
5. *Tecmo NBA Basketball*, Tecmo
6. *Super Mario Kart*, Nintendo
7. *Super Star Wars*, JVC
8. *Super Conflict*, Vic Tokai
9. *Tiny Toon Adventures*, Konami
10. *Cybernator*, Konami

Sega Genesis
1. *X-Men*, Sega
2. *Bulls vs. Blazers*, Electronic Arts
3. *Tony LaRussa Baseball*, Electronic Arts
4. *RBI Baseball '93*, Tengen
5. *Hardball III*, Accolade
6. *Fatal Fury*, Takara
7. *Flashback*, US Gold
8. *Cool Spot*, Sega
9. *Road Rash II*, Electronic Arts
10. *PGA Tour Golf II*, Electronic Arts

Game Boy
1. *Super Mario Land 2*, Nintendo
2. *Kirby's Dream Land*, Nintendo
3. *Yoshi's Cookie*, Nintendo
4. *Super Mario Land*, Nintendo
5. *Tetris*, Nintendo
6. *NBA All Star Challenge 2*, LJN
7. *Yoshi*, Nintendo
8. *Golf*, Nintendo
9. *Tiny Toon Adventures*, Konami
10. *Baseball*, Nintendo

NES
1. *Tecmo NBA Basketball*, Tecmo
2. *Yoshi's Cookie*, Nintendo
3. *Dragon Warrior IV*, Enix
4. *Tiny Toon Adventures 2*, Konami
5. *TMNT The Manhattan Project*, Konami
6. *Super Mario Bros. 3*, Nintendo
7. *Tecmo Super Bowl*, Tecmo
8. *Dr. Mario*, Nintendo
9. *Super Mario Bros. 2*, Nintendo
10. *Tetris*, Nintendo

Sega Game Gear
1. *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, Sega
2. *Taz-Mania*, Sega
3. *Streets of Rage*, Sega
4. *Land of Illusion*, Sega
5. *Outrun Europa*, US Gold
6. *Vampire, Master of Darkness*, Sega
7. *Prince of Persia*, Tengen
8. *Defenders of the Oasis*, Sega
9. *The Majors: Pro Baseball*, Sega
10. *Arch Rivals*, Flying Edge

Sega CD
1. *Jaguar XJ220*, JVC
2. *Road Avenger*, Renovation
3. *Adventures of Willy Beamish*, Sierra
4. *After Burner III*, Sega
5. *Night Trap*, Sega
6. *Sewer Shark*, Sony Imagesoft
7. *Cobra Command*, Sega
8. *Hook*, Sony Imagesoft
9. *Black Hole Assault*, Big Net
10. *Wonder Dog*, JVC

Sierra Network Adds NTN Games

Interactive programming by NTN Communications will debut on The Sierra Network (TSN) this fall with over a dozen game shows and sports games. Included are trivia games like **Showdown** and **Countdown** and an NFL licensed football game called **QB1**. These are already familiar to patrons of nearly 900 hospitality operations in the U.S. and Canada that are linked to the NTN Entertain-

Sierra offers challenging games for modem users.

ment Network. In fact, the games will be the same ones, ported through TSN's graphic front end, and players are offered a competitive mode for more action.

Super Off Road Player Wins Toyota

Jolene Kudma, Norman, OK, won a 1993 Toyota 4 Runner in the Toys "R" Us Video Mania Sweepstakes.

Tradewest arranged for the car to be given away as part of the company's promotion of the video game series, **Ivan Stewart's Super Offroad**.

Spectrum HoloByte Gets Bullet-Proof

Spectrum Holobyte Inc., who brought **Tetris**, **Falcon** and many other games to computer systems, acquired Bullet-Proof Software USA, the video game publisher that made **Tetris**, **FaceBall 2000** and **Yoshi's Cookie** for Nintendo systems. Financial details were not revealed.

The acquisition also established a link with Bullet-Proof's former parent company, Bullet-Proof Software Japan. Henk Rogers, Bullet-Proof founder and chairman, said, "Spectrum HoloByte and Bullet-Proof have always shared resources. It's a pleasure to be on the same team, finally."

Konami Quits Computers

Konami closed its computer division to concentrate on video and multimedia games, and transferred distribution of all its computer game titles to GameTek.

The Konami distribution agreement more than doubles Gametek's PC games library with the addition of 2 new and 25 current titles. The agreement "brings us into the top 10 entertainment PC publishers in the world,"

according to Gordon Walton, GameTek's vice president of product development.

Deer River Offers Vacations on CD

There are hours of favorite vacation activities around the world available on Deep River Publishing's **Adventures** CD-ROM for Microsoft Windows, that helps you go where you want to go, do what you want to do.

The travel resource disc has 45 minutes of video, 2500 full-

color photos and over 2,000 pages of text covering a wide range of experiences—like hiking in the Himalayas, bicycling through France or shooting the rapids in a kayak.

The material is cross-indexed for search by activity, location, time of year, tour group, difficulty, appropriateness for kids, or any combination of these factors.

"There is a vacation for everybody in **Adventures**," said Deep River president John B. Lincoln, "from the daring and diehard sports fanatic to the avid art collector to the serious

gardener." The disc retails for $79.95.

Quick Fix For Indy 500

Papyrus Design's new BBS (phone 617-576-7472) has an upgrade available for download to users of **Indianapolis 500: The Simulation**. The upgrade features enhanced graphics and provides support to Sound-Blaster and compatible soundcards on 386 and 486 computers.

A LOOK TO THE EAST

by Marc Camron

Well, it's hard to believe that half of the year is gone, and we are starting to look at games for the holiday season and beyond. The two biggest events of the year, the Summer CES in Chicago and the Tokyo Toy Show, have just come to an end. These shows are the cornerstones of the industry, and offer the forum for everyone to see the new products for months to come.

It seems that every year, something else seems to be happening between the Japanese and American markets. It appears that the gap in time between when a game is released in Japan to when it comes to the U.S. is ever closing in. Major companies like Nintendo and Sega are making an effort to bring American gamers the newest games faster than ever before.

With that in mind, lets take a look at some of the products that were prominent at the Tokyo Toy Show, and their anticipated U.S. arrivals.

Portable Super Famicom?

No, we aren't talking about a new kind of bag to carry your machine over to a friend's house. Behind closed doors, Bandai was showing a true portable Super Famicom system. Not a hand-held, this machine is closer in size to a PC Engine Duo, and opens like a clam shell.

It has a full-color screen (four to five inches, diagonal) and one controller built-in. The cartridge slides into a slot on the inside of the top, to the right of the screen.

This is not the first time a company has come up with a portable version of one of Nintendo's machines. Thus far, every attempt to release a portable Famicom or Super Famicom has been thwarted by the Big N. Bandai, however, may have just enough clout to pull it off.

As of yet, specs and price have not yet been released on this monster machine, and there is no indication as to when it will be released either over in Japan or here in the States. Still, this is one great looking piece of equipment, and as soon as pictures and more information become available you will be sure to hear about it right here!

Four, four, 4 games-in-one!

One of the most interesting items at both the Tokyo Toy Show and the Summer CES was Nintendo's decision to bring out a special 4-in-1 Mario Cartridge for the Super Famicom (and SNES).

In Japan they are calling this ultimate Mario Cart **The Super Mario Collection**. On it will be included all four of the 8-Bit Super Mario Brothers games. That's right, I did say four! Avid gamers will

Super Mario never looked so good as in the new Super Mario Collection.

remember that the original **Super Mario Brothers 2** was not released in the United States. This game, which looks very much like the original **Super Mario Brothers**, was passed over since Nintendo felt that America didn't want just more of the same. Instead they revamped a game called **Dream Land** and released that in the U.S. as **Super Mario Brothers 2**. That game was left unreleased in Japan until last year, when Nintendo introduced it as **Super Mario U.S.A.** In Japan, the game will include **Super Marios 1, 2, & 3**, as well as **Super Mario U.S.A.** In the United States, the game will be called **Super Mario All Stars** and will refer to the old games as **Super Marios 1, 2, & 3**, and "**Super Mario Brothers: The Lost Levels**. If all of this sounds a little confusing, don't despair. Both versions will feature identical games and game play, and the U.S. version will be released in August, only one month after the Japanese.

And for everyone wondering why they should be interested in these versions of

the **Super Mario** games, Nintendo has enclosed enough new bells and whistles to make this the value package of the year.

Aside from getting a game that has never been released in this country, players will be treated to an upgrade of all the older games. The graphics have been improved to true 16-Bit style, and the sounds have been redone as well. Also new to this cart is the ability to save your place in any of the Super Mario Games. There are three slots for each of the four games, making a total of twelve. This means that players do not have to play all the way through a game to beat it. It will also encourage people to explore more, rather than just warping to the end.

Let's hope that Nintendo does well with this game, and considers revamping some more games in their library. It would be great to play 16-Bit versions of the original **Zelda** games or **Metroid**.

Final Fight 2, #1.

Final Fight 2 has been released in Japan, and shot straight up the charts to the number one position. The 10 Meg game picks up where the arcade and previous SNES versions left off. The new **Final Fight** is an original effort, and right now there is no news as to whether or not it will be released as an arcade title.

The Japanese version of the game is different from the American one. The female enemies are removed and some of the boss attacks are changed.

Mary is just one of the enemies you won't find in the American version.

Castlevania Part ?

Konami, in the spirit of spreading the wealth around, will be introducing a version of **Castlevania** for the PC Engine. While there is not a lot to report at this time about the cool-looking CD-ROM version of the mega-popular series, it is obvious that a lot of time and care went into making this version something special. When asked if this game would be coming out in the United States, TTI responded that it "was not on their schedule at this time." We hope that TTI can bring games like this out as it would be a boost to their ailing system sales.

The PC Engine version of Castlevania features some huge Boss characters.

Y's on down the road.

The very popular Y's series (pronounced "ease") is preparing for its fourth incarnation. Titled **Y's IV: The Dawn of Y's**, the game looks much closer to the first two games in the series. Play will be from a top-down perspective, rather than the side-scrolling action style of the third **Y's** game.

The first system **Y's IV** will be released on is the PC Engine CD-ROM, but given the popularity of the series, it will be sure to be ported over to other systems shortly thereafter. Right now there is still no word of an American release, or even which companies may be considering the license.

Adol is back for more adventure in Y's IV: The Dawn of Y's, coming in the Fall.

We are the Champions...

Or, to be more precise, the Champion Editions. **Street Fighter 2** mania is still in full swing, both here and in Japan. Capcom is finally breaking down the barriers and releasing the game for all major systems. A couple of months back we reported in A Look to the East the decision to make a **Street Fighter 2: Champion Edition** for the PC Engine. This unprecedented 20-Meg chip sets new standards of quality on the PC Engine.

There has also been a lot of talk about the **SF2CE** for the Genesis/Mega Drive, and most recently, the **Street Fighter 2: Turbo Champion Edition** for the Super Famicom.

Well, it seems that neither the confusion nor the excitement end here. Now Capcom has changed the Genesis/Mega Drive version! Originally reported as a 16-Meg cart, the new version is a whopping 24-Meg. Renamed **Street Fighter 2: Special Champion Edition**, this one will include all of the moves from the **Turbo** edition going to the Super Fami, but also some super secret enhancements that Capcom says they will fill us in on later.

Capcom is definitely bringing both the new SNES and Genesis versions to the States, but it is not yet certain whether or not TTI will get permission to bring their version over for the DUO. Given the success of the game, one would think that the announcement of the release will be forthcoming.

Between all of the games to be released, and the additional spin-offs (including the movie), it looks like the Street Fighter 2 craze will be around for a while longer.

すべてが分かる完ペキガイド

STREET FIGHTER II TURBO

ストリートファイターIIターボ
完全ガイドブック

Dinosaur teeth varied in size and shape depending on what the dinosaur ate. *Herbivores* had round, dull teeth for chewing plants. *Carnivores* had sharp, pointed teeth for chewing *Herbivores*. Be careful. To them, *you're* just a snack.

YOU CAN BE THE VELOCIRAPTOR.

Only on *Jurassic Park™* from Sega™ can you play the dinosaur as you attempt to escape the armed guards of *Jurassic Park*.

The movie brings them to life. The game invites you to join in.

JURASSIC PARK

At the end of their powerful legs and muscular arms, many dinosaurs were equipped with razor-sharp *claws*. Ours are no different. And no less dangerous.

IT TOOK 65,00

TO MAKE T

Try not to end up here. The powerful jaws of the meat-eater *Tyrannosaurus rex*. They had pointed, six-inch-long teeth and really bad breath. Keep out.

The reptiles that could fly, the *Pterosaurs*. They ruled the sky while the dinosaurs ruled the Earth. Be careful as you move through *Jurassic Park*. You never know when one might drop in.

A typical walk in the park 130 million years ago would have looked like this. Ferns, cycads, and other plants were everywhere. Just like the jungle of our game.

FACE TO FACE
ON SEVEN DIFFERENT
LEVELS. Work your way through the

Visitors Center, Pump Station, River, Volcano, Canyon, Power Station, and *Jungles* of *Jurassic Park*.

At one time, all the continents were grouped together forming one *supercontinent* called *Pangaea*. This may explain why dinosaur fossils have been found in so many different places around the world.

It's still unknown why the dinosaurs disappeared. One theory suggests that a huge asteroid struck the Earth sending dust into the sky and blocking out the Sun. Or maybe they died of boredom; there were no video games back then. What do you think?

This is *Amber*. The fossilized resin (sap) of an ancient tree. Have you got something you want to preserve for 65 million years? This is the way to do it.

Dr. Robert T. Bakker is a real paleontologist. He helped us design *Jurassic Park* for Sega.

Imagine: You're walking through the jungle 130 million years ago. Be sure you don't step in this. It's a fossilized dinosaur *dropping*. Today, they can help scientists reveal clues to a dinosaur's diet and nutrition. (You'll be glad to know, we've left these little land mines out of our *Jurassic Park*.)

Bones that have turned to stone and ancient impressions in rocks. Fossils are our best window to the past. Fortunately, more and more of them are being discovered each year.

YOU CAN BE DR. GRANT.
You can choose to play Dr. Grant as he tries to escape the dinosaurs and treacherous jungles of *Jurassic Park*.

Unlike real paleontologists, Dr. Grant uses tranquilizer darts, a stun-gun, flash grenades, gas grenades, super darts and dinosaur bait.

0,000 YEARS
HIS GAME.

This is the team that designed and created *Jurassic Park* from Sega. Their task was to produce the best looking, most exciting dinosaur game possible. Nice job.

Just like in the movie. A dinosaur is a cunning and ferocious adversary. Remember, if you can't beat them, join them. In *Jurassic Park* from Sega, you can play the dinosaur.

Identifying fossils is difficult and time consuming. Finding a game in the store is too. For your reference, this is *the* game box to look for: *Jurassic Park* from Sega.

Over the years, humans have developed large, intelligent brains. We can think like no other species ever has. For years, it was thought that dinosaurs were *dumb*, pea-brained creatures. That may be wrong. We've learned recently that they actually migrated to different areas and even cared for their young. Are they smart enough to beat you in *Jurassic Park* from Sega?

THEY GET SMARTER AS YOU GET BETTER.
Jurassic Park from Sega was designed to include D.P.A.™ *(Dynamic Play Adjustment.)* So as your game skills get sharper, the dinosaurs become harder to outsmart.

Pea-sized brain? Maybe. Maybe not.

LEG
ARM
FACE
TONGUE
LARYNX
SENSATION
SIGHT
HEARING
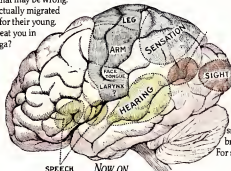
Big, smart brain? For sure.

SPEECH   NOW ON

SEGA
G E N E S I S ™

COMING SOON TO GAME GEAR™ AND SEGA CD™

INSERT COIN HERE

Summer Stock
by Jay Carter

In the world of the performing arts, specifically the theater, summer stock at regional playhouses has always tended to be not only a great proving ground for up-and-coming talent, but also a stage for celebrities who never leave the limelight. Well, such is also the case for coin-operated amusement equipment where beachside locations and resort areas suddenly get an infusion of the latest games for vacationers.

From the New Jersey Shore in the East to the West Coast's Santa Monica Pier, every game room is stocked. And whether it's a new company hoping to strike it big with a new introduction or a major manufacturer continuing a string of hits, this summer has a lot to offer all intrepid game players.

Leading off this month's highlighted games is Konami, where design teams must be working around the clock given the multiple titles that have recently been released. **Wild West Cowboys of Moo Mesa** takes the heroes and villains of Cowtown from the Saturday morning TV screen and brings them into the game room because Lily Cow has to be rescued from the clutches (hooves?) of the Masked Bull.

It's up to Marshall Moo Montana, the Dakota Dude and the Cowlorado Kid to right the wrongs and also defeat Mayor Bulloney and his cousin Sheriff Terrorbull in action that will find you shooting it out in such locales as the infamous Skull Mountain and an anything but deserted ghost town.

Using an eight-way joystick and two control buttons for shooting or jumping, there are numerous backdrops to travel through and a never ending stream of sight-gags and subtle touches that make this an udderly refreshing change of pace from more conventional action/adventure games.

However, if your taste in game play isn't bovine-inclined, Konami has another

fighting game ready to be released for the arcades. It is entitled **Mystic Warriors–Wrath of the Ninjas**, with the same type of control panel and a world that is once again on the verge of Armageddon. It seems that Mr. Otomi's evil robotic ninja army, known as Skull, is not just out for

devastation, but has also gone and kidnapped a friend of the good guys.

And who are the good guys? Well, they're an eclectic bunch of ninja warriors including Spyros from the United Kingdom, Xojiro and Xeima from Japan, the U.S.'s own Brad, and Yuri who hails from Hong Kong. All have their own special techniques and attack methods as you make your way through nine different stages of play that will take you from the streets of New York to a trip along a river and down ski slopes on
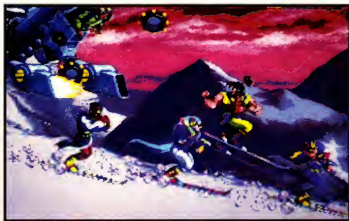
your quest to take on the powerful Hasega wa, the chairman of the board of Skull, Inc., and then, finally, the ultimate mega-battle against Otomi himself.

If the heat of summer days has you looking for video that's more aquatic where you can really make some waves, get **In the Hunt** from Irem and take control of a sub that is anything but sub-standard.

In fact, in this one- or two-player side-scrolling adventure you'll be able to blast your way through a dazzling marine universe of over-sized, colorful adversaries that are just waiting to take the punishment of your torpedoes, missiles, mines and machine guns.

There are six stages of play to contend with and you'll control your submarine and firepower via an eight-way joystick and two action buttons that can launch a forward torpedo attack or an upward /downward barrage to destroy enemies lurking in the depths of the sea or flying overhead. You'll also discover that power-ups are important additions to your arsenal with three different varieties to be on the lookout for.

With the impending release of **Street Fighter 3** taking much of the spotlight, as well as the ongoing rumors of Midway readying a sequel to **Mortal Kombat**, fighting games continue to dominate the attention of most players. And Kaneko, probably better known for their **Chester Cheetah** home game effort, is hoping to capture some of the coin-op action with **Shogun Warriors**.

A multiple character martial arts creation with controls provided through joystick and action buttons, this competition features the likes of Sabu and his flying fury, Suma, Samurai, Geisya and the bloody crane, Kappa's turtle spin crush and Kabuki. It's the familiar premise for head-to-head play and should help fill the void if you're waiting to check out the next editions of **SF** and **MK**.

On another front, World Cup fever hasn't really hit the United States yet,

but it's coming for next summer and the hope by many is that this forum will finally provide soccer the type of notoriety here it already enjoys around the rest of the globe. In the world of coin-op, soccer has long been a staple attraction that tends to reemerge on an annual basis. This time it's no different with two renditions to choose from.

Adding to their ever increasing library of solid titles for the Neo•Geo system, SNK has served up **Super Sidekicks** which shouldn't be confused with the early summer Chuck Norris film. Here the challenge is for one or two players to compete for the World Championship of soccer in a full scrolling (primarily top-down side view) game where once you've selected from twelve different nations it's on to the glory.

What's interesting about this effort is that you have two different game modes highlighted by an SNK Cup that consists of five warm-up games that will lead you into two final tournament contests as well as head-to-head championship play. In addition, **Super Sidekicks** provides a touch of greater realism with field conditions that might have you playing in the rain or under the stadium lights. Besides your joystick, your two action buttons control long kicks, shooting and sliding along with blocking, passing and tackling an opposing player.

With some great cut-away action and pop-up windows that neatly complement the side-scrolling action, Taito's **Hat Trick Hero '93** is a one– to four-player soccer simulation that really captures much of the strategy and precision shooting and passing of the real sport.

Wrath of the Ninjas features characters that perform extremely powerful moves.

There are any number of special techniques to perfect via your joystick and three action buttons whether you're attempting a super dash, screw spin kick or a death-defying save in the goal.

From the worldwide phenomenon of soccer, there is yet another activity that has international popularity as proven by the hundreds of players who came to Milwaukee from as far away as Japan, Australia, France, Hungary and Holland to compete in the 3rd Annual International Flipper Pinball Association World Championships.

Over the May 21st weekend, heated competition for doubles, mixed doubles and singles went almost non-stop until

Fight in many battles in your undying quest to defeat the evil power of SKULL.

Rick Stetta from Sunnyvale, Calif., walked away with the crown as the world's best pinball player. The event also provided the official unveiling of the first licensed product for one of the summer's biggest box office hits—Jurassic Park. From the Michael Crichton best seller to Spielberg's epic special effects adventure, Data East brings dinosaurs to life on a pinball with their creative adaptation of **Jurassic Park**.

A multi-mode pinball machine that will have you shooting for raptors, spitters and mosquitoes, **Jurassic Park** features a T-Rex on the playfield that can swallow a ball along with a special Chaos mode that throws players headfirst into some frenetic six-ball action. Also at hand for these world-class pinball players was the special appearance of **Tee'd Off** from Premier Technology, a zany golf theme layout that offers volcanos, coconut bonuses, a spinning gopher wheel and more twists and turns than anyone waiting to yell "fore!" Better practice those short putts!

We'll have even more on these two new pinballs next time around, along with the other latest and greatest coin-op attractions. But, as summer continues to count down to its eventual conclusion, as always, keep playing and have fun!

YOUR MUG HERE

YOUR BABE?

SHINING FORCE

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

You control the archers. You control the magicians. You control
different characters at a time. You control how long it takes to reach the epic
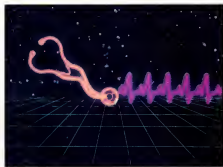*You control your purchasing decisions. You control your destiny. You control*

GAME DOCTOR

Question Quest!

Before we get started with this issue's Game Doctor column, I want to again thank all those ambitious and aspiring artists out there who've sent us their Qs in decorated envelopes. I also wanted to point out that any artist who does not wish to see their full return address printed as part of the envelope should either write it on the back of the envelope, or else inform us in the letter itself. We'll be happy to eliminate the personal info.

Now, before letter bombs begin to arrive, I want to amend, or at least expand, on my comments regarding **Street Fighter II** to Matt Hester of Lafayette, IN. And what better way to approach the subject than through a **SFII**-related question?

Q: Everywhere I go, **Street Fighter II** on the SNES always seems to be sold out. Do you have any idea how many copies have been sold?

Aaron McClellan
Lancaster, TX

A: According to Capcom, slightly over two million copies of the SNES version of **SFII** have been sold in the United States. Worldwide sales should at least double that number, and with new conversions of **SFII: Turbo Champion Edition** about to appear, we could see a duplication of the SNES edition's success. It certainly seems as if **SFII** is destined to be the best-selling game of the 16-bit era.

I'd also like to say that I don't believe I was completely fair to the game in my remarks last issue, when I said that I didn't believe it was as innovative and remarkable as past arcade-derived mega-hits such as **Pong**, **Space Invaders**, and **Pac Man**. The various configurations of **SFII** are actually role-playing action games, with players becoming completely immersed in utilizing the particular combat skills of each fighter. As a result, the fighters in the **SFII** games become real characters, like the professional wrestlers in the WWF titles from Acclaim

/LJN/Flying Edge (especially **Royal Rumble** on the SNES). This type of experience is seldom available to gamers and rarely executed as skillfully as in the **SFII** games. Okay, folks? We friends again?

Q: I am writing this in reference to a letter from Adam Aiello in your April '93 EG column. Referring to the Super-FX chip, Adam asks: "Why doesn't Nintendo get it right the first time, instead of making all their fixes after the system's released?" Nintendo did get it right the first time. I believe the SFX chip was not, as you called it, "an after-the-fact fix."

I think that piece of technology was intentionally withheld from the SNES, but not as a cost cutting measure, as some would believe, because it only added $5-$10 (depending on the retailer) to **Star-Fox**. If one SNES owner buys three SFX games, that's three times the profit on that chip, instead of a one-time sale if Nintendo had included it as part of the SNES hardware.

It's important to remember that the SNES was not a spur-of-the-moment product. Nintendo is well aware of its shortcomings and the money to be made by selling its licensees and, ultimately, the public, its specialty upgrade chips. After all, the money is in selling the software, not the hardware.

Steve Ouderkirk
Ontario, Canada

A: Good golly, Steve, what a cynical (albeit intelligent) analysis!

I, myself, would be reluctant to draw the same conclusion, but you make several excellent arguments. And either way, Nintendo doesn't come out looking too good.

Yes, it's true that Nintendo had plenty of time to produce its 16-bit machine, but if it held out on the hardware in order to sell more software, things haven't exactly worked out that way. There were clearly many buyers in pre-SNES America who had not yet purchased a Genesis because they were waiting to see what

Nintendo had to offer, given its multi-year delay in entering the 16-bit sweepstakes. And, in fact, the initial reaction of the American public to the SNES, and the **Super Mario World** cartridge that came enclosed with it, was disappointment, and the perception that the SNES was merely a glorified 8-Bit system. Let's face it: if it hadn't been for **SFII** (there's that name again!), Sega would probably have attained dominance, rather than parity, in the 16-Bit universe by now.

There's no question that there's more money to be made in software than hardware, and Nintendo has always been aware that this is the kind of business where you virtually give away the razor in order to sell the blades. But how do you account for the fact that Nintendo is keeping this SFX technology to itself for the present? If selling chips is where the profits are, why not sell them to any third party publishers who want them? Or do you have an even more cynical explanation? I'd love to hear it, Steve...

Q: I read in a Japanese magazine that HudsonSoft is making a 32-bit game machine. It is supposedly compatible with Turbo Duo/PC Duo games and also has a slot for 32-bit carts. It was unveiled at the '92 Winter Games Show in Tokyo. My question is: when will this machine reach the U.S. and how much will it cost?

Juil Sohng
Tenafly, NJ

A: While the breadboard for a 32-Bit system from HudsonSoft (half-partners, along with NEC, in the Duo line) has been seen at Japanese trade shows, a date for its release had yet to be announced at press time. Since the system hasn't even gotten a release date or price point in Japan, it's way too soon to speculate on its arrival here in the States. Perhaps the Summer CES will produce some further information on this system (in which case see the CES report elsewhere in this issue).

Q: Gentlemen, I just read Daniel Haffner's letter knocking the Game Genie in the March '93 EG. Unfortunately, Game Genies and similar devices are a necessary evil due to long and difficult games that lack level selects (passcodes). So many new carts have tons of levels, but no way to access them individually. Because I don't like to play games ten hours straight (as Mr. Haffner claims he does), I am unable to reach the end of a game in one sitting, if at all. Take, for example, **Chakan**, **Death Valley Rally**, and **Super Star Wars**. They are all programmed so that the only way to get to the end is to play the game straight through. This would be similar to playing **Prince of Persia**, without passcodes, in one sitting.

If I finish the first ten levels of a certain game, why do I have to keep repeating them over and over to get to the next ten levels? Game programmers leave out passcodes and level menus because they assume everyone is going to cheat. However, since we are spending our hard-earned money on these games, we should be given the benefit of the doubt. Personally, I am tired of being treated like a child.

To sum it up, every cart should have a level menu, battery backup, or passcodes.

Mr. Joseph Orlando
c/o The Heffner Agency
Garden City So., NY

A: Well said, Joseph. I certainly agree that every progressive game of the type you mention should have level menus, passcodes, or whatever else is required.

I disagree, however, that programmers leave those components out because they presume the players will provide them. Rather, I think it's the fear that the game will be "used up" too quickly, and will be dismissed after a rental or two rather than purchased for ongoing play. The games you mentioned, however, are all worth owning because they are worth replaying; one doesn't necessarily play **Super Star Wars** to get to the end. If a game is good, it will be played again and again, no matter how many times the gamer completes it. In fact, the only thing likely to discourage long-term play is forcing the player to advance through levels they've already mastered over and over.

Q: With Sega introducing the Mega-LD pack for Pioneer's Laser Active machine, will that mean we will never see the Giga Drive? Is the Mega-LD taking the place of that, or will Sega bring out the Giga Drive

too? Also, the 3DO machine is supposed to have such good software FMV that it will supposedly take the place of both video games and VCRs, right? How can it do this if it will be using 5" compact discs?

B. Richardson
Auburn, NY

A: At this time, Sega of America has no plans to bring the Giga Drive to the U.S., regardless of the existence of the Pioneer system. While even overseas plans have not yet been announced, the Giga Drive seems to be aimed squarely at Japan and other markets where Mega Drive/Genesis sales are slowing down. Releasing a 32-Bit system in the United States at this point would hopelessly confuse the market, draw negative consumer feedback, and probably derail Sega's current Genesis and Sega CD sales.

Also, don't expect the 3DO to replace your VCR just yet. While the MPEG compression standard looks good, it will take some time to see how the public will react, and accept yet another form of entertainment media.

Q: I have a couple of questions about gaming devices from the early 1980s. What was the CVC Gameline, exactly? From my understanding of it through an old magazine ad, it was a modem-type device that allowed Atari 2600 owners to play video games through the phone lines.

Also, what happened to all those personal computer/keyboard modules for the Atari 2600 that Atari, Entex, and SpectraVideo were planning to release?

Vic Twenty George
Westfield, MA

A: You've pretty much got the picture on the Gameline, Vic. It actually got off the ground and ran for a while before questionable business practices led to its demise. Basically, it was a 2600 modem that permitted games to be downloaded on a pay-per-play basis. I believe this company, under new ownership, eventually evolved into Quantum Link, the most popular on-line service for the C64.

As for those ridiculous keyboard peripherals for the 2600, they all went down in flames during the great Shakeout of '84. I seem to recall that these keyboards were all unveiled at the same CES, along with Atari's headband controller—a device that supposedly allowed gamers to control on-screen movement with their minds, but which actually

a superb headache construction kit.

Also, Vic, thanks for the fascinating pro-Game Genie comments. Vic brings up the point that the Genie can also be used to make games more difficult, which would make it ideal for those gunslingers whose "conquered" games are collecting dust in the closet or are headed for the next garage sale.

Q&A Quickies: To the many readers curious about the nature of Game Doctor Prize Packets, they are collections of buttons, posters, t-shirts, key chains, and other interesting paraphernalia game companies send the Doc or he acquires at trade shows. Some especially nice folks at companies like Virgin have even taken to sending us extra goodies just for the prize packs. In other words, don't expect to win a game system or a trip to Sega of Japan or anything like that; but we've never had anyone return a Prize Packet... Bryan Bruner of Memphis, TN, wonders whatever happened to Atari's Swordquest contest? The competition, as old-timers may recall, was to involve four 2600 titles: **Fireworld**, **Earthworld**, **Airworld** and (you guessed it!) **Waterworld**, with the prize being a beautiful, jewel-encrusted sword. The first two games, unfortunately, were actually released, to the appalled gasps of gamers everywhere, and, along with such stirring turkeys as **Pac Man**, **E.T.**, and **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, helped sink the 2600. As for the sword itself, while I don't believe it was ever actually awarded, I understand it was put to good use as several top Atari executives were persuaded to fall on it... Matt Hopkins, meanwhile, of Magnolia, NJ, accuses the Doc of being Sushi-X. Sorry, Matt, the Doc isn't Sushi, or Quartermann, or Big Van Vader, or Arnie Katz, or anybody but... The Game Doctor. I've been in practice for a dozen years now under that name and it's the only other identity I have... Thanks to Robert Smith of Upland, CA for sending a sample of his programming prowess on disk... Finally, to John Montaluan of Elmhurst, NJ, check out EG #7 (April, '93) for details on the forthcoming SNES CD drive...

All of which takes us around the bend (where we spend as much time as possible) and off into the sunset for another month. We'll be back next issue with lots of post-CES info. Meanwhile, send those questions, commentary, and corrections to the one, the only...

The Game Doctor (EG)
330 S. Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107
Aloha.
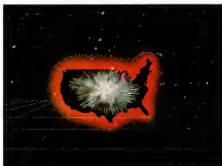
Thirty Years of Fanzines
by Arnie Katz

I occasionally get letters from enthusiastic electronic gaming fans that attempt to explain the mystery of fanzines to me. Evidently, some readers are still under the misapprehension that I'm just a Vile Pro who earns a few extra bucks for this column every month.

Though it's true that I earn my living as a writer, this column doesn't put even one additional dollar in my wallet. I do it because I believe in fanzines.

And I believe in fanzines because they've played such a pivotal role in my own life. This year marks the 30th anniversary of my first fanzine.

Cursed #1 was a wretched 10-pager about fantasy and science fiction. Several hundred more zines, all of them much more entertaining, have followed. I've made many friends through fanzines, including Joyce Worley and Bill Kunkel.

I still publish fanzines even though magazines are my career. If editing **Electronic Games** is like taking center stage in a big concert hall, then a fanzine is more similar to entertaining friends in my home. These are different experiences, and I don't want to miss either type.

Some say I go easier on first issues. To a limited extent, that's truth. I can't forget that even though my co-editor Len Bailes also became a writer in the intervening years, our first fanzine was a lot worse than most debuts sent here for review. I think it's important to allow for neofannish errors, but I expect a fanzine to improve in subsequent issues.

My fanpublishing hobby also shapes my attitudes toward the relationship between prozines and fanzines. I don't like bad, high-flown imitations of the newsstand titles, because there's nothing I respect more than the enthusiasm and dedication of fanzine editors. I'm as proud of my fanzines as I am of my professional writing and editing, and I want faneds to feel the same pride in their efforts.

Before I get misty about old fanzines, let's return to the present. I've gotten lots of good zines this time, so let's pull the staples and look them over together.

Classic Systems & Games V2; #5
Edited by Jeff Adkins
11 Windsor Ave.
Attica, NY 14011
Frequent, $1.75 per issue, 18 pages

This is my favorite fanzine about old video game systems, probably because it covers so many of the ones I recall so fondly. Jeff also puts together must-read content about Atari 2600, Intellivision, ColecoVision, Odyssey, IntelliVision, and Vectrex. I wonder if he'll add the 8-Bit consoles in a year or so?

Klax for the Atari 2600 is the cover-featured game of the month. It was also fun to see the retrospective on **Squish 'Em** for ColecoVision.

Jeff sometimes gets a little carried away with hyping his fanzine. It is, however, an outstanding zine that speaks eloquently for itself.

Digital Press #11
Edited by Joe Santulli
44 Hunter Pl.
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 22 pages

The latest issue of this top fanzine looks better than ever. Joe Santulli has some new desktop software, and he's brightened and lightened **Digital Press**. Thankfully, the varied material is as interesting as always.

Digital Press devotes a large portion of the current issue to classic game platforms, but Joe doesn't neglect contemporary gaming. It's worth getting whether you want insight into the latest games or the all-time greats.

Great material like the serialized gaming encyclopedia make **Digital Press** a must for serious game-lovers. Sending for a sample could be the best money you spend this week.

Dystopia #1
Edited by Dennis Crowley
6 Hill Street, Medway, MA 02053
Frequent, $2 per issue, 56 pages

Power Play has ceased publication, but Dennis' new title more than fills the void. The cartridge coverage continues to be good, and he's now trying to take a broader look at the hobby.

More efficient space management would have trimmed a few of the zine's 56 pages, but there's no denying that this is a well-presented publication that brims with information from cover to cover.

Power Play taught Dennis the basics of fanzine production. Now he's ready to edit a fanzine that could soon become one of the top-ranked titles.

Fantazine #1
Edited by Pat Reynolds
1740 Millbrook SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Monthly, $1.50 per issue, 22 pages

Circumstances caused the editor to drop **GameLord**, but he's roaring back into active publishing with **Fantazine**. Pat has taken the opportunity to make some editorial changes, for the better. It's still mostly about video games, but the content is more sophisticated.

The editor says he wants **Fantazine** to be driven by opinions. If the first issue is a fair sampling of future contents, Pat is sure to get his wish. I can't go along with all Pat's opinions, but no one will be tempted to skip over them. I would caution Pat that things aren't always as cut and dry as they may seem.

Pat seems to have fresh energy and new ideas for his fanzine. **GameLord** is gone; long live **Fantazine**!

In Between the Lines #2
Edited by Sean Pettibone
206 Red Maple Ct., Troy, MI 48098
Bi-monthly, $.75 per issue, 8 pages

Sean is one of the trailblazers in current fandom. His informal, humorous

fanzine is a stimulating change-of-pace.

The second issue has a letter column, short video game reviews, his picks for the year's best, and three separate columns of editorial opinions. Maybe Sean should string them together into a long rambling editorial in future issues.

In Between the Lines is a bold new experiment that is already proving to be quite a success. Don't miss the good times; buy a trial copy.

IntelliVision Lines #7

Edited by Ralph Linne
8385 Findley Dr.,
Mentor, OH 33050-3811
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 8 pages

Do you remember when George Plimpton compared Atari to IntelliVision in all those early 1980's commercials? This little publication has plenty of news and information about Mattel's video game console in its eight half-size pages.

The main items in the current issue are another serving of the IntelliVision history, a checklist of games that were announced but never released, and Ralph's editorial describing his search for rare cartridges.

The price seems a little steep, but there aren't many alternative sources for information about this machine. It's a neatly designed and produced fanzine that honors a major milestone in gaming history.

Random Access #1

Edited by Scott Boehmer
118 Surrey Lane, Lake Forest, IL 60045
Infrequent, $1 per issue, 16 pages

Scott Boehmer is another faned whose changing tastes have led him to fold his old title and start a new one. As much as I enjoyed the 11 issues of his previous fanzine, his new one looks like a major step forward in virtually every respect.

Scott's personalized editorial and a description of a coin-op and video game museum in St. Louis are high points of this extremely well executed first issue. I hope Scott gives more space to air his soapbox column in future issues. He shows a flair for candid commentary that makes points without arrogance or over-bearing pompousness.

The Shape of Gaming to Come #8

Edited by Darren A. Krolewski
38150 Mt. Kisco
Sterling Heights, MI 48310
Monthly, $1.50 per issue, 28 pages

From its glorious color cover to the unique spiral binding, this is the most eye-catching publication in electronic gaming fandom. Darren, who has

cracked professional journalism in recent months, shows just how much can be done with a personal publication.

Video gamers will definitely want to try a sample copy of this one. The writing is as good as the layout, and that's no small compliment.

SNES Gaming #2

Edited by Rich Wigstone
770 Concord Lane
Hoffman Estates, IL 60195
Frequent, $1.50 per issue, 8 pages

This review-oriented fanzine, which focuses on Nintendo's 16-Bit system, has made great strides in its second edition. The newsletter-style layout promotes easy reading, though eliminating the lines between columns might clean up the design a little.

The cover review is *Magical Quest Starring Mickey Mouse*. *Zelda III* and *StarFox* are among the other cartridges that go under the critical microscope.

Spectrum #2

Edited by Ara Shirinian
10904 Haislip Ct.
Potomac, MD 20854-2251
Quarterly, $1 per issue, 14 pages

Add Ara to the list of fast-rising new fanzine editors flooding into fandom these days. This is only the second issue, and already *Spectrum* is a worth-while purchase.

Ara discusses video game advertising, specifically this winter's Sega campaign, in his front-page editorial. He's one of fandom's budding humorists, and is showing some talent for being funny while making sense. I especially enjoyed a secondary editorial about putting the fun ahead of raw competition in gaming.

Other material includes reviews of multi-player video games, a letter column, some clever cheats, a piece on brain-games, and more. This fanzine deserves encouragement, so give Ara a chance to show his stuff.

Super Gamer #9

Edited by Eric Longdin
19 Vermont St. Methuen, MA 01844
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 26 pages

Eric has decided to give his fanzine a thorough overhaul while continuing the title. Among the changes for the better are major coverage of the Duo and the inclusion of heavy metal music reviews.

There's still plenty of reviews and tips for SNES, which clearly remains the editor's first love; there is nothing wrong with this–writing a lot about your favorite system is what fanzines are all about.

Sometimes a tune-up like this is just what an electronic gaming fanzine needs to jump up to the next gaming level.

Uproar #2

Edited by Michael Pittaro
18 Old Coach Rd., Hudson, NH 03051
Frequent, $1 per issue, 22 pages

When I wrote about improving with experience, this is one of the fanzines I had in mind. The first *Uproar* flashed promise, but the second is much better. Naturally, this is probably due to the editor's insistence on better quality and perhaps even spending more time than usual on his great second issue.

The writing is relaxed, though tight editing keeps the pace fast. Excellent cartridge coverage is the main attraction, but Mike evidences appreciation for almost every variety of electronic gaming. If the third issue shows as much progress, I'll have to break out a fresh supply of adjectives.

Viewpoint #1

Edited by Alex Frias
265 Cherry St., Suite 6J
New York, NY 10002
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 26 pages

"Video Gaming Monthly no more, only **Viewpoint**" a coverline blares from the cover from Alex's brand new fanzine. His editorial explains that he wanted a more original name, one that reflects broader editorial horizons. It looks like the new title is ready to replace the old one as one of fandom's leading publications.

Future issues may show new directions, but Alex has stuck with the columnists, reviews, letters column, and fanzine critiques that made **VGM** such a favorite. If you're not yet familiar with Alex Frias' fanzines, now is the perfect time to climb on the bandwagon, because **Viewpoint** will undoubtedly pick up new readership with its new outlook. Again, the new scope of this magazine, along with others previously mentioned, makes me rather excited about the future of fanzines. Many times, a poor showing on the first few issues may discourage editors. However, **Viewpoint** picks up the pace and never lets it down, and this is great for readers.

Blaze demonstrates her new Side Kick Attack. Skate delivers a Head Butt and Elbow Smash Combo.

Skate's Migraine Attack is a major headache for these punks. Use the Corkscrew Attack on the bikers lurking around the corner.

Blaze's deadly Kikousho Attack can even the odds. Look for power-ups and weapons inside the trash can and other canisters.

If Skate's Double Side Kick doesn't put out that fire, try the Migraine Attack. Axel goes on a rampage when he gets his hands on weapons like the lead pipe.

W E L C O
M E T O T
H E N E X
T L E V E L

Axel's Grand Uppercut is the key to reaching Mr. X. Vanquish your foe once and for all with the Dragon Smash.

Skate, Blaze and Axel of Streets of Rage 2 have all their tricks from the Genesis™ version, plus a completely new maneuver. Good thing, too. Cuz if they're going to bring peace back to the streets, they're going to have to go through Mr. X. And he's not feeling very neighborly.

Honey, the fellow with his knee in the street thug's groin– isn't that the Johnson boy?

GAME GEAR

WHAT'S THE WORLD

COMING TO

WHEN IT'S EASIER

TO GET A DEGREE IN

BRAIN SURGERY

THAN A SEGA™ SEAL OF QUALITY™

ON A VIDEO GAME?

Watson University
IN THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SATISFACTORY FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIRED COURSE OF STUDIES OF THE

College of Brain Surgery
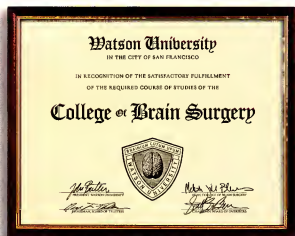
There are 4,000 brain surgeons just in the
United States alone.

OFFICIAL

SEGA™

SEAL OF
QUALITY

A scant 200 Sega Seals were awarded last year
in the whole wide world.

The Sega Seal of Quality. With it, you're assured a game has passed the most rigorous battery of quality control and playability tests ever devised, and that it pushes the limits on the fun meter. What's more, the Seal guarantees the game, when used properly and not as a door stop, will not damage a Sega Genesis,™ Sega CD™ or color portable Game Gear.™

Without the Seal? Well, about **WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL** the only thing we can guarantee is that you could be setting yourself up for a big, big headache. If that happens, don't come crying to us. Heck, call a brain surgeon.

Players' Guide to Interactive Cartoons

tainment world to star in an impressive array of video, computer, and multi-media games. Cartoon and comic book characters are suddenly red hot license properties. As developers begin to master the possibilities of 16-Bit and multi-media technology, cartoon characters and their colorful environments can be reproduced with amazing verisimilitude. Better still, toons are a hot commodity. Full-length animated features have had a great success ratio over the past five years, sparked partially by the definitive cartoon movie, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* Roger's eye-popping blend of live action and animation rekindled the dormant interest in cartoon characters and toon iconography. Add the staggering success of the recent Disney releases, from the most recent re-release of *Jungle*

In other words, folks, get ready for Toon Time in Interactive City!

Disney Developments

When the subject is animation, the talk invariably turns to the studio created by visionary genius Walt Disney back in the early days of talkies. Disney, in fact, fashioned such a smoothly-running machine that it continues to turn out state-of-the-art animation decades after its founder's death.

The Disney licenses generally fall into two categories: cartoon characters and full-length animated films. The mainstay of the first category, of course, is, was, and probably always will be: Mickey Mouse, the star of the breakthrough Genesis game, **Castle of Illusion** (Sega)

Playing Toons on a Cartridge

by Bill Kunkel

Life in Toontown is never dull.

Safes fall out of windows and transform cats into accordions or pancakes. The citizens leave a dust cloud behind them whenever they run. Color and black & white characters live side by side in social harmony—except maybe for cats, dogs, and mice.

And, of course, nobody ever *really* gets hurt. Oh, sure, a toon might plummet the depth of the Grand Canyon and be reduced to a small, greasy spot. But they're always back, good as new, just in time for the next gag. Old toons never die, after all; they just go into syndication or end up on the Cartoon Channel.

Disney's Aladdin, a movie hit, is now making an appearance on the Genesis.

Lately, in fact, some of Toontown's most prominent citizens have even been making deals with the electronic enter-

Book to the Academy Award winning *Beauty & the Beast* and *Aladdin*.

These days, everyone from Rocky & Bullwinkle to Ren & Stimpy have interactive media deals. All the major Disney, Warner Brothers, and Hannah-Barbera characters have been signed up, and one licensing project—the Genesis version of the hit film, Disney's *Aladdin*—was so huge it took the efforts of three companies (Disney, Virgin, and Sega working in unison) to get it on retail shelves. Then there are the cartoon-style characters created specifically for video games, such as Accolade's Bubsy Bobcat, who has subsequently been licensed to star in his own animated TV special due for broadcast this Thanksgiving. Add in the hot new animated TV series such as *The Simpsons*, *Ren & Stimpy*, and *Batman: the Animated Series* along with cartoon characters from TV commercials (Chester Cheetah, the Pink Panther) and you've got a gold mine of conceptually loaded licensing material.

and most recently **Magical Quest starring Mickey Mouse** (Capcom) for the SNES. From his very first on-screen appearance in the b&w cartoon *Steamship Willie* to the present, this charismatic rodent remains the uncontested king of the funny animals. Mickey also made an appearance in Sega's **Fantasia** for the Genesis, reprising his famous "clean up" scene from *The Sorcerer's Apprentice.* Other Disney stars who've made the transition to

video games include Goofy, the cast of TV's *Talespin*, Darkwing Duck, and, of course, Donald Duck. Disney's most excitable boy, Donald co-stars with Mickey Mouse in Sega's **World of Illusion starring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck**, while the rest of the Disney Duck Dept. (primarily Huey, Dewey, and Louie and Unca Scrooge) make their most recent appearance in Capcom's **Duck Tales 2** for the NES.

Mickey Mouse has had a few exciting adventures on the video game format.

Goofy will be stumbling onto both the Genesis and SNES. Capcom is bringing the **Goof Troop** to the SNES in an adventure based on the popular TV show. Goofy and young Max must leap into action when Pete is mistaken for a pirate king by a group of freebooters and kidnapped in this angled topdown contest. Of course, Pete is pretty satisfied leading a life of royal luxury, so Max and the Goofster have a heck of a time getting him to leave before the *real* pirate monarch returns to take his revenge.

Absolute, meanwhile, will be producing **Goofy** for the Genesis, with our hero working as chief custodian at the Ludwig von Drake Natural History Museum, right next to an envious Pete. Pete covets Goofy's latest invention: the Extend-O-Hand, one of those collapsible, scissoring devices which allows Goofy to reach for books and other objects from a distance. So Pete sets about booby-trapping various museum exhibits, one of which causes a heavy object to strike Goofy's head, rendering him even dizzier than usual. While in this dazed state, Goofy imagines himself in a variety of historical periods, from prehistory, to the Middle Ages, colonial times and the Wild West.

Goofy must retrieve a lost object from each era and defeat Pete, who appears in all four time periods as an end-level boss.

The **Tailspin** crew, meanwhile, turns up on the NES with all the airborne antics and high speed hijinks of the TV show. The player must guide bearish pilot Baloo and the Mini Sea-Duck, his rickety aircraft, on a series of cargo transport missions while bad guys like Shere Khan, Don Karnage, and their minions do everything possible to stop him. The game features an angled overhead perspective that gives **Tailspin** a unique and attractive look.

Another Disney arrival on the NES is one of the company's newest TV series characters: **Darkwing Duck**. Darkwing is a private eye up against a sinister, acronym-using organization named F.O.W.L. which is intent on taking over the city of St. Canard. The player, as Darkwing, must go forth and investigate with the aide of his faithful sidekick, Launchpad McDuck. If they're successful in uncovering clues, the side-scrolling trail eventually leads to F.O.W.L. honcho, Steel Beak.

Disney's most recent full-length animated features, meanwhile, have been extensively adapted to video game format. Capcom, publisher of the NES and Game Boy versions of **The Little Mermaid**, will also turn out the SNES game based on Disney's latest smash, **Aladdin**. The Genesis version of Disney's **Aladdin** is a major new release from the triumvirate of Disney, Virgin Games, and Sega. Virgin, meanwhile, also has a gorgeous Genesis version of **The Jungle Book** ready to roll, while Sunsoft has not one, but two **Beauty & the Beast** games for the Genesis.

Belle's Quest is a puzzle-oriented adventure in which the female player-character must outsmart Gaston to locate her father's whereabouts. The game includes a maze-chase through the Black Forest and a tour of an enchanted castle, with

extensive cinematic cut scenes and music from the film score.

Roar of the Beast is a more action-packed contest, with the gamer taking the role of the Beast. The player-character must first battle through a pack of killer wolves, then defend the castle and the angry villagers, before finally confronting Gaston in hopes of breaking the spell which keeps him a beast.

The Genesis version of Disney's **Aladdin** is a truly remarkable achievement. With the help of Disney's top flight animators, Virgin was able to max out its platform game engine first used in **Global Gladiators**. The character animations are among the largest, most expressive ever seen in a video game, and the shadings and color textures used to create the backgrounds are almost as spectacular as those seen in the film. Although Capcom's SNES version of the Arabian Nights classic is also quite beautiful, it does pale somewhat in comparison to the awesome Genesis game.

That mischievous devil, Taz, has found a home on the byways of the Super NES.

Bugs, Daffy, & Otherwise Insane: the WB Crew

Next to King Walt's creations, the most popular cartoon characters in film history belong to the Brothers Warner. With such major talents as animator/director Chuck Jones, writer Michael Maltese, and the inimitable voice characterizations of Mel Blanc (even Mel's son has been unable to capture the essence of his greatest characters), Warner's animation studio turned out some of the most memorable characters in cartoon history, including: Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Sylvester & Tweety, The Road Runner & Wile E. Coyote, Speedy Gonzales, and the Tazmanian Devil.

Sunsoft is the leading player in the Warner Bros. sweepstakes with a solid selection of titles including **Taz-Mania**, **Road Runner's Death Valley Rally** (both

Playing Toons on Cartridge

on the SNES), and a pair of knockout newcomers: **Bugs Bunny Rabbit Rampage** and **Daffy Duck: The Marvin Missions**.

Rabbit Rampage is a gorgeous looking side-scroller that perfectly captures the ambiance of Bugs' adventures. A paint brush magically transforms a white screen into a cartoon wonderland at the start of every turn, while an eraser appears to rub out the scene after each player failure. Bugs is harassed by that dumb Warner Bros. dog who pursued the numero uno cartoon rabbit through dozens of cartoons in the '40s, frequently stopping to ask: "Which way did he go, George? Which way did he go?" This cruel jibe at Lenny in *Of Mice and Men* has long been forgotten, but the dog remains with us, as resolute and incompetent as ever. And this time he's

Bugs Bunny, following the Roadrunner's example, gets his own video game.

brought a whole bunch of his favorite friends with him.

Bugs has several weapons at his disposal for avoiding or otherwise dealing with the dopey mutts. He can leap high into the air, throw pies, deliver mighty kicks, and even decoy dogs by placing a bone on the ground and luring them to it—with their posterior perfectly positioned for a punt.

Even when Bugs buys it, the cartoonish "death" animations are so hysterical, they make the loss fairly palatable.

The second major new entry in the Warner Bros. category is Sunsoft's **Daffy Duck: The Marvin Missions**. In this game, Daffy once more assumes the identity of Duck Dodgers, deepspace duck and fearless adventurer. In fact, the game itself is based on the classic cartoon, *Duck Dodgers in the 24th-and-a-half Century* in which Daffy and his space cadet flunky (played by Porky Pig) do battle with a mysterious martian named Marvin who mostly resembles a Roman Centurion's helmet with legs. The fate of the Earth, of course, remains in the balance.

That wacky, rascally duck joins the fray with some outer-space adventuring

There are several special features in this game, but the best is a smartbomb-type option in which Daffy totally spazzes out, dithering madly in a dozen different directions, a mad whirling dervish who takes out any enemies in his way. There are also special cartoon weapons, such as the ice gun which freezes enemies, a time warp weapon which leaves opponents moving in slo-mo, or a super bullet which breaks up into three smaller bullets on the way to its target. The music and sound effects, by Nu-Romantic Productions, perfectly captures the aural quality of cartoon mayhem.

The Warner Bros. cartoon games from Sunsoft were developed by Icom Simulations and represent some of the finest work ever done in this field.

TecMagik, one of the newer video

game software companies, also has a couple of Warner Bros. stalwarts in the Genesis version of **Sylvester & Tweety: Cagey Capers**, in which the player, controlling the always-hungry Sylvester the Cat as he creeps, runs, and otherwise pursues the tiny little yellow ball of feathers and feigned innocence, Tweety Bird. The character animation is superb here and the game itself does a great job of taking the essence of the Sylvester/Tweety cartoons and transforming it into a playable game. The voices for the main characters are digitized right off the cartoons, and virtually every member of the Sylvester & Tweety supporting cast is present, including soft-hearted Granny, Hippety Hopper, and, of course, Spike.

Sylvester, that bad 'ol puddy-tat, is on the prowl for the sweet Tweety bird.

The plot is also right out of a WB cartoon: Tweety periodically hides in a bottle of "Hyde Potion," for example, and turns into a huge, bug-eyed monster.

Finally, Sega-maniacs will be happy to learn that **Desert Demolition: Road Runner & Wile E. Coyote**, a Road Runner cartoon cast as an interactive action contest, is available from Sega, as is the Genesis version of **Taz-Mania**.

Bugs and Crew: Mark II

One of the great modern cartoon concepts, Tiny Toons takes the Warner Bros. characters and shows us their Next Generation: baby versions of Bugs, Daffy, and company, along with a few original characters.

The top Tiny Toon character is Buster Bunny, a diminutive version of the carrot-chomping Bugs and the star of Konami's **Tiny Toon Adventures: Buster Busts Loose** (SNES) and **Tiny Toon Adventures: Buster's Hidden Treasure** (Genesis). **Buster Busts Loose** offers six levels and five mini-games, while in the latter game, Buster and buddy Gogo Dodo explore 33 play levels on a fantasy treasure hunt.

In the 8-Bit universe, there are two

current NES TT contests: **Tiny Toon Adventures 2: Trouble in Wackyland** and the **Tiny Toon Adventures Cartoon Workshop**. **Trouble in Wackyland** sets the characters in a wild and crazy amusement park with a roller coaster ride, a log flume amusement, a spooky train trip, bumper cars, and a fun house. **Cartoon Workshop**, meanwhile, allows youngsters to create their own animated cartoons, using characters and backgrounds from the *Tiny Toons* TV show, which can be stored on videotape for later viewing.

Rocky and Bullwinkle will battle Boris and Natasha across the video screen.

Hannah-Barbera: Past and Future

Although the Hannah-Barbera studios have turned out thousands of cartoons and almost as many different characters, the two toon families most often associated with H-B are the cave-dwelling Flintstones and the futuristic Jetsons. The game rights to these characters are held by Taito, which has produced **The Jetsons: Cogswell Caper** and **The Flintstones: The Rescue of Dino & Hoppy** for the NES.

The families from cartoon history, past and future, also make several appearances on portable systems (see the Portable Toons sidebar) and the latest release, **The Flintstones 2** will be released for both the NES and the SNES.

The Independents

Some cartoon characters have been around forever without being associated with a particular studio, while others are too new to have a well-known home base. Rocky & Bullwinkle, Tom & Jerry, Felix the Cat, and the Pink Panther are all Toontown mainstays, but only animation trivia buffs could name the studios for whom they toiled.

They're back now, however, in video game form. Absolute is publishing **The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle and Friends** for the Genesis, while T*HQ has Moose and

Squirrel on the SNES in **Rocky & Bullwinkle**. Absolute's entry features co-stars Boris & Natasha, and Dudley Do-right, while the T*HQ version should be available now.

Tom & Jerry, meanwhile, the most famous cat & mouse tandem in toons, have hit the big time with a full-length motion picture on the way to theaters and several electronic incarnations of their adventures already in release. The SNES version of **Tom & Jerry** is a one- or two-player game in which Jerry (or, in the two-player version, Jerry and his pal Tuffy) must make it all the way from the outskirts of town to their home without suffering any disasters on the way. The game begins downtown, where our mouse (or mice) must scamper down alleys, through movie theaters, junkyards and other obstacles on the long and winding road home. The hazards they encounter along the way include malevolent wind-up toys, falling sandbags and, but of course, feline Tom himself.

In the NES version, the player once again takes the role of Jerry, who must outsmart Tom and rescue Tuffy from a trunk in the attic before time elapses.

Felix the Cat, the wonderful, wonderful cat with the magic bag of tricks, is one of the veterans of the cartoon business. Felix arrives on the NES courtesy of Hudsonsoft.

Meanwhile, the Pink

Panther, star of cartoons, films, and insulation commercials, goes to Lotusland in **Pink Goes to Hollywood**, a SNES offering from TecMagik. The Oscar-winning pastel panther, who starred in 226 different cartoons during his illustrious career and had his very own theme scored by no less a master than Henry Mancini, is back, bigtime. He will be featured in a major new animated film later this year and will return to television with all-new toons in September. But none of this has gone to Big Pink's head—he still finds time to serve as mascot for the Starlight Foundation.

Now there's one heck of a toon!

In **Pink Goes to Hollywood**, our hero travels to the motion picture capital to audition for a new movie role, but once he arrives, things start to go wrong. He inadvertently stumbles into a set during the shooting of an Inspector Clouseau movie, inspiring the enmity of the inept Inspector who proceeds to chase him through a dozen different film sets.

The silent, side-splitting Pink Panther also tries the video game platform.

Pitch-Toons

The latest toon invasion has come from animated characters who first appeared as sales devices and mascots in TV commercials.

Chester Cheetah, for example, spent years working as a shill for a cheese snack before hitting the big time as a SNES video game star for Kaneko. Then there are those fabulous Spots, the red discs representing the 7-Up logo. In one of the most daring license acquisitions in electronic gaming history, Virgin took a shot and licensed these energetic little dudes for a series of games. The first, **Spot**, was a clever variation of the strategy-intense board games Reversi and Othello while for the second, **Cool Spot**, a single shades-wearing Spot enjoyed a visually breathtaking side-scrolling action adventure that has to be seen to be appreciated. **Cool Spot** is now available on both the Genesis and the SNES.

Playing Toons on Cartridge

TV's Trendiest Toons

The return of animation to television has created several popular new series and one undisputed phenomenon. That, of course, is Matt Groening's classic *The Simpsons*, a license which Acclaim fell on almost the instant it appeared on American TV screens.

What could possibly go wrong with super-student Bart Simpson's studies?

SNES Simpson games include **The Simpsons: Bart's Nightmare**, and **Krusty's Super Fun House**. **Bart's Nightmare** has Bart attempting to retrieve his wind-scattered homework through some incredibly funny sequences—including one in which our hero is transformed into "Bartzilla," a giant dinosaur with Bart's unmistakably spiked-out head who smashes through town, destroying buildings and stomping on cars.

In **Krusty's Super Fun House**, the embittered clown's domicile is overrun by rats and it's up to Bart, Sideshow Mel, and Corporal Punishment to end the infestation.

Acclaim's NES Simpsons games include **The Simpsons: Bartman meets Radioactive Man** and **Krusty's Fun House**. The latter is simply a scaled-down version of the SNES game, but **Bartman meets Radioactive Man** is an original design in which Bart learns that Radioactive Man has been stripped of his powers and is currently imprisoned and it will require all the powers of the mighty Bartman to save the day.

Finally, Genesis owners can now join in on the fun with a version of **Krusty's Super Fun House**, **Bart vs. the Space Mutants**, and **Bart's Nightmare**. **Bart vs the Space Mutants** is an excellent game that previously appeared on the NES in which Bart must halt an invasion of Earth that only he is aware of.

Krusty's Fun House challenges players to help capture the menacing mice.

New titles include **The Simpsons: Itchy & Scratchy**, the first game to star that ultra-violent, hyper-kinetic cat and mouse connection. The two wreak every imaginable form of mayhem upon one another in the course of this SNES and Genesis-bound release.

The other red-hot cartoon license based on a new TV show is *Ren & Stimpy* from the Nickelodeon cable network.

T*HQ Software holds the license for the NES and SNES editions of **Veediots: the Ren & Stimpy Show**. The game's graphics expertly capture the super-colorful, kids-of-all-ages ambiance of the TV show as the asthmatic Chihuahua and his feline sidekick romp through a surreal universe only they could inhabit.

Real *vs.* Reel: Life in the Cool World

Games based on full-length animated feature films are not limited to Walt Disney productions, as evidence by Ocean's elaborate translation of the Ralph Bakshi production *Cool World* in which an animator finds himself mysteriously transported to the cartoon strip world he has been drawing.

Life in this toon-based world is a lot more complicated and sinister than Roger Rabbit's Toontown. Some of the cartoon characters want to escape into the "real" world and become human beings, while our animator hero must adjust to existence in a world where the social conventions and physics of cartoons are the ruling forces.

The toons in *Cool World* are called Doodles, and their attempts to penetrate our reality is upsetting the balance between the two dimensions and it's up to the gamer, as artist Jack, to overcome the efforts of Holli Would, Slash, and Vegas Vinnie. **Cool World** is available on the NES and SNES.

It's a Wrap!

With animation one of the hotbeds of current media, we're likely to see a lot more licensing into the electronic gaming world. It's even possible that, in the search for previously-unsigned cartoon characters, some of the older and lesser known cartoon and newspaper strip denizens may turn up in the future. Characters like Betty Boop, Woody Woodpecker, Calvin & Hobbes, and others would be just perfect for adapting into the interactive electronic medium.

Toons in my Pocket

by Bill Kunkel

With cartoon and comic strip themes exploding onto the video game scene (don't worry, cartoon explosions simply blacken faces and soil clothes), it was inevitable that there would be a spillover into the portable scene.

In addition to hand-held conversions of already-mentioned video games, the list of original portable titles is absolutely amazing.

Bart has to save the day as Batman when he challenges Radioactive Man.

Game Gear Gets Animated

One of the big winners in Sega's recent surge in popularity is the Game Gear. Acclaim/LJN/Arena/Flying Edge have four Simpsons titles alone on the Gear: **Bart vs the Space Mutants**, **Bart vs the World**, **Bartman meets Radioactive Man**, and **Krusty's Fun House**.

Sega, meanwhile, has **Quest for the Shaven Yak Starring Ren Hoek and Stimpy**, **Tom & Jerry—The Movie**, and **Deep Duck Duck Starring Donald Duck**. The Ren & Stimpy game, based on the popular characters appearing on cable TV's Nickelodeon, has the weird little dog and the crazed cat facing dirt geysers, egg-bombing buzzards, and arty toads on their quest to return the hooves of the Great Shaven Yak.

Tom & Jerry, the much-travelled cat and mouse team known primarily for their stint at MGM, have made it to a feature length movie, which Sega is adapting to the Game Gear format. **Tom & Jerry—The Movie** is a five level, high-speed contest with several top-notch bonus rounds.

Donald Duck, Walt Disney's number two attraction, waddles onto the Game

Gear in **Deep Duck Trouble**, a Carl Barks-style adventure which has Donald journeying around the world to return a sacred pendant which was plundered by his Uncle Scrooge.

Comic book fans, meanwhile, will definitely want to check out **X-Men** for the Gear, also from Sega, based on the popular Genesis game, while Warner Brothers cartoon enthusiasts can revel in GG versions of **Taz-Mania** (Sega) and **Sylvester & Tweety: Cagey Capers** (TecMagik).

Game Boy-Sterous Toons

The Game Boy is still the volume leader in the portable game field, with plenty of toon and comic book-based titles in its vast library. In Simpsonville, Acclaim's various labels offer **Bart Simpson's Escape**, **Bart & the Beanstalk**, **Bart vs. the Juggernauts**, and **Krusty's Fun House** for the GB.

Activision has **Popeye 2**, a cute sidescroller on the Game Boy starring the famous Thimble Theater characters, while Capcom has a nice selection of GB titles starring Disney toon and feature film stars **Darkwing Duck**, **Talespin**, and **The Little Mermaid**.

Tom & Jerry, still flying high on the strength of their motion picture deal, were signed by HiTech for **Tom & Jerry**, and **Tom & Jerry: Frantic Antics**, both on the GB.

Warner cartoon afficionados will be gladdened to learn that Sunsoft has both **Looney Tunes** and **Speedy Gonzales** on the Game Boy, with the former starring Bugs, Daffy, Porky, Tweety, and the Tazmanian Devil, among others.

Second-generation WB stars, meanwhile, can be found in Konami's Tiny

The fastest mouse in all Mexico is ready to speed across the Game Boy.

Toon collection for the Game Boy. The **Tiny Toon Adventures** include **Montana's Movie Madness**, and **Babs' Big Break**. Comic book fans can also look to Konami for **Batman: The Animated Series**, one of the year's strongest GB entries.

Finally, **The Flintstones: Treasure Island** and **The Jetsons: Robot Panic**, both from Taito, feature excellent graphics and plot lines faithful to the original series. In Robot Panic, mechanoids are running wild and it's up to George to settle things down; Treasure Island, meanwhile, is a seven-level platform game which includes sequences in which Fred rides dinosaurs and drives the famous Flintmobile.

Toons in electronic gaming are bigger than ever—even when the screens are getting smaller.

— Bill Kunkel

The Players' Guide to
Interactive Cartoons

Hulk, ever since Stan Lee's Marvel first shook the comic universe in the early '60s. The edge in power has shifted back and forth several times. DC has had tremendous success in films, thanks largely to its relationship with Warner Communications. The Superman and Batman films have been big budget, high-profile releases, while Marvel's characters have mostly been relegated to movie-of-the-week status. And while DC scored a brilliant marketing coup with it's recent "Death of Superman" and "Reign of the Supermen" series (not to mention the inevitable "Return of Superman"), the fact is that the retail shelves have mostly belonged to Marvel in the three-plus decades since the FF took a joyride into outer space and came back with generic superpowers.

The Merry Marvel Marching Society

The Marvel superstars who have drawn significant attention on the video game front are the X-Men and Spider-Man. Spider-Man stars in, among others, Sega's Genesis **Spider-Man**; **Spider-Man: Return of the Sinister Six**, from Acclaim for the NES; and **Spider-Man vs. the Kingpin**, a side scroller from Sega for the Sega CD in which Spidey scours New York in search of Venom and the Kingpin.

Marvel's Merry Mutants, meanwhile, slashed through in Sega's **X-Men** for the Genesis, complete with heavy TV ad hype and the full cast, including Wolverine, Nightcrawler, Gambit, and Cyclops, battling Evil Magneto, while Storm,

From Panels to Game Screens

by Bill Kunkel

Comic books started out as collections of newspaper strips. Color presses were so expensive to run that it was actually more economical to keep them going, 24 hours a day. The problem: what else could be run on them other than the funny pages? The solution: comic books.

Comic books soon evolved into a medium of their own, with super-powered beings of both good and evil intent dominating their pages since the '30s.

DC, with its cast of classic super-heros—Batman, Superman, Flash, etc.—has done battle with Marvel Comics—whose big guns included Spi-der-Man, the Fantastic Four and the

Sunsoft has **Superman** for the Genesis and SNES, in which the pre-death Man of Steel must rescue Lois from the clutches of Metallo, Mr. Mxyzpltk and Braniac. Superman can fly, use heat vision, possess "sonic spin" (don't ask), and super strength. The SNES version is due next February.

Batman: Revenge of the Joker, previously available on the NES, is now headed for the Genesis as well. Armed with batarangs, a crossbow, a sonic neutralizer and other power-ups, the Caped Crusader stalks the Joker in this side-scrolling, multi-level pursuit contest featuring hot sound and graphics.

Batman Returns, based on the second film in the Tim Burton series, is also available on multiple systems, but they are different games from different publishers. The SNES version is a superb side-scrolling combat contest from Konami, while Sega's Genesis version is a less appealing take on a similar presentation. Sega even attempted to enhance the game by adding driving sequences for **Batman Returns** for the Sega CD, but aside from the Batmobile material, the game is unimproved in this new format.

The Amazing Spider-Man TM & © Marvel Entertainment Inc.

The Man of Steel breaks through the comics barrier and onto the Genesis.

Archangel, Rogue, and Iceman arrive as backups.

Other than Spidey and the mutant crew, however, only ol' Greenskin, **The Incredible Hulk**, was scheduled to star in a video game (for the SNES) in the next few months.

The Malibu Gambit

One of the most interesting developments in the comic book/electronic games crossover phenomenon is being orchestrated by software veteran Bob Jacob and Malibu Comics, a ground level comic book publisher with a couple of very hot titles: *Ex-Mutants* and *Dinosaurs for Hire*, both of which are being published for the Genesis by Sega.

The unusual abilities of each of these groups is sure to provide a great game. Mutants and dinosaurs always add fire.

The Originals-Cartoon Characters Created for Gaming

by Bill Kunkel

Sure, it's always easier to license existing toons. Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny, Pink Panther, and other classic cartoon characters bring with them instant recognition and a powerful storehouse of personal memories. But as Nintendo proved with its Mario family of stars, creating your own memorable animated characters can bring some major dividends.

Sonic the Hedgehog's free-flowing form was created just for video games.

For one thing, the character can be visually fine-tuned to create the personification of their powers, whereas studios like Disney and Warner Bros. are extremely picky when it comes to altering the physical appearance of their characters. For another, there's no licensing fee to pay and, if the game is a success, sequels and merchandising are right around the corner, creating a vital profit source for the game creators.

Or, to put it another way, would you rather own the rights to **Super Widget**, a popular kiddie cartoon which Atlus acquired for translation to the SNES, or to **Sonic the Hedgehog**?

In fact, if a video game or computer contest contains sufficiently appealing characters, they might wind up being licensed by the movies and TV in a beautifully ironic turnabout on the usual procedure. Look at the success of the film *Super Mario Brothers*, based on the adventures of Nintendo's most famous siblings. And **Bubsy Bobcat**, from Accolade's hit SNES game, will be appearing in his own special later this year.

Among the newest original cartoon characters created for a video game is **Ardy Lightfoot** and his cast of characters who'll be appearing in the forthcoming ASCII SNES release named after the protagonist. Ardy is a fox with a penguin sidekick named Peck, who basically serves as Ardy's attack dog; when menacing creatures show up, Ardy sics Peck on them and the penguin's razor-sharp teeth generally make short work of the opponent.

Ardy was designed by Denny Moore of Moore & Price Designs, a company that, while most readers won't recognize them, have played an absolutely crucial role in the design and presentation of some of electronic gaming's most popular original characters, from the Street Fighters to Sonic the Hedgehog.

Denny is a self-effacing fellow who tends to downplay his role in the video game revolution, but the fact is that without him, some of today's most beloved game characters would look considerably different. His job: designing new characters from scratch (as in Ardy Lightfoot) or modify characters from Japanese games (such as Sonic and Mega Man) so that they will be more attractive when viewed through American eyes.

"I've worked on Master Higgins for Hudson Soft, and if you look at him when he was in the Japanese market, he was a very short, pudgy guy, and we made him more of a fun-loving, hip character that kids could relate to.

"We took Sonic and we made a few changes, we altered his fins and his spine. We also worked on Mega Man,

Bubsy is another character that was made with video gaming in mind.

who we changed from the Japanese version—which was a very young, very cartoony-looking character with really big eyes—into a sort of small superhero. We made him more muscular, added a lot of detail and did a good job.

"The Street Fighter characters started out as very Japanese, with small heads and huge eyes and we've since adapted the characters for every **Street Fighter** game on every platform. We also helped develop the **Streets of Rage** and **Eternal Champions** characters for Sega."

Moore & Price (for partner Tracy Price) have also contributed significantly to Sega's hip new look. They did the entire new Sega Line look, the hardware, the Sega CD logo, and the Sega Sports logo, one of the best logos ever used in the business.

What does Moore see as the primary difference between Japanese and American sensibilities in the area of character design and overall packaging? "The Japanese like big eyes with an oval shape, which I generally try to change, subtly, into a more almond shape. Then I look at the head, which I try to keep in proportion to the body—the Japanese tend to exaggerate various body parts. Instead of stylizing, I like to take the character and make them more realistic, what I call a 'Disneyesque' look. I also like to take the points off the ears of characters and make them smaller. The Japanese also have a fondness for blue, green and pink hair, while I like to make the hair somewhat more realistic.

"What we like to do is use a brush to go around the outside, lighter in one spot and heavier in another to give the character a weight, whereas the Japanese tend to give their character outlines the same weight all the way around."

"We recently Americanized Pac Man for a U.S. game—we've done all the Namco Pac Man games: **Pactris, Pac Man 2**, all of them. And one of the first things we did was make Pac Man's nose smaller; he originally had this Pinocchio-sized nose!"

A character he does like, however, is Iguanasoft's **Aero the Bat** from Sunsoft. "He's a good character. I think he needs a little more work, but basically he's on his way to being a strong character."

The Players' Guide to Interactive Cartoons

Steel Yourself For Adventure

Recently, however, more sophisticated attempts have been made to bridge the cartoon and comic book universes with state-of-the-art interactive entertainment. Virgin Games, for example, has signed comic book superstar Dave Gibbons (illustrator of the classic Alan Moore series *Watchmen*) to work with developers Revolution Software Ltd. on a software project called *Beneath a Steel Sky*, billed as "the world's first computer-based animated comic book adventure."

The plot, set in the near-future, sees our planet under the dominion of six corporations, which have systematically plundered the ecology, forcing the popu-

NBC from '79 to '80). Indeed, Jonny even returned to us in comic book format several years ago from Comico.

The show was based on the adventures of Jonny, the bright young son of Dr. Benton Quest, a brilliant scientist whose work took him to the four corners of the globe. Also along for the ride were Jonny's young friend, Hadji, two-fisted adventurer Race Bannon and, of course, Bandit the dog. (As an interesting side note, the original voice for Jonny was a young Tim Matheson.)

A computer adventure starring Jonny has been in the works for years, but it is finally ready to debut, courtesy of Hollyware, in time for the holidays, spurred by the recent *Jonny Quest* feature film which appeared on USA Network.

Computer-toons and Comic Strips

by Bill Kunkel

While comic book and cartoon characters have experienced a boom in the video game marketplace, the computer world has been considerably less receptive. For a variety of reasons, computers and video games have developed into different environments. Video game systems, for example, are hooked up to the TV, where everyone in the family has access to it; computers generally sit in work stations, in the den or home office, away from the flow of house traffic. Video games frequently offer multi-player games; computer gaming is mostly solitary. Video game hardware is inexpensive; computers are costly.

As a result of these divergent demographics, entertainment software for computers tends to stress edutainment, simulation, stat-oriented sports games, and RPGs. Unless he appears in an educational context, Bugs Bunny is simply not perceived as a hot character in the computer software market.

That's not to say that there haven't been cartoon and comic strip-based programs for PCs. Several years ago, Infocom attempted an experimental series of "InfoComics," marginally interactive stories told in a burlesque of comic book styles. The interactivity extended only so far as to allow users to follow the story from the point-of-view of any of the main characters. Otherwise, there was no game component; just an electronic variation on illustrated prose.

lation to take refuge in corporate-controlled city-states. The only other alternative is life in what is known as The Gap, the wasteland areas whose residents are known as Gap Dwellers. One of these Gap Dwellers is Robert Foster, the player-character who is captured by security forces and taken to the nearest city-state as the game begins.

Beneath a Steel Sky's ambitious plot, full of complex character interactions and novelistic details, is driven by Revolution's virtual theater engine which produces situation-based reactions on the part of the cast. In fact, the game can be replayed over and over without exactly duplicating the plot and dialogue. Yet for all its thematic complexity, the interface is designed to be extremely intuitive.

Questing with Jonny Quest

In addition to games based on comic book-style storytelling, the computer software shelves occasionally offer up a game based on an honest-to-goodness cartoon superstar. And what better animated superstar to helm a computer adventure than **Jonny Quest** himself!

Although this Hannah-Barbera action series ran only a year in prime time (September 18, 1964-September 9, 1965), it left an indelible mark on the babyboomers who saw it during its three Saturday morning incarnations (CBS from '67 to '70; ABC from '70 to '72; and

Another classic animated TV series which has been picked up for translation to computer is **Speed Racer** from Accolade. Genesis and SNES versions are scheduled for release early next year, but the PC Speed Racer game, **The Challenge of Racer X**, is due in September. Users can play the game either as

WE NEED YOUR HELP RACE !!!

The old-time favorite boy hero, Jonny Quest, is making a PC appearance.

Speed, racing in his famous Mach 5, or contest as the mysterious Racer X in his Shooting Star. Racer X turns out to be Speed Racer's older bro, Rex Racer, and the two wind up helping one another in a race involving such characters as Captain Terror and Snake Oiler. The game has car-related features and should provide both action gaming and nostalgic appeal to the fans of the TV series.

— Bill Kunkel

EG Previews the Games of

3DO

by the Editors of Electronic Games

The First Look at the First Wave

Less than six months after its official debut, 3DO has become less a bandwagon than a steamroller. At latest count, 302 publishers have signed agreements to make software for the hardware which Panasonic, Sanyo, and AT&T will introduce this fall and winter.

It's an exaggeration to say that every game company has a 3DO project, but almost all the significant ones do. **EG** predicts at least 30 programs will be available for the black box multiplayer by the end of the holiday season.

"We're right on track," says a confident Trip Hawkins, president of The 3DO Company, which licenses the technology. Companies hoping to ride the first wave, to capitalize on initial enthusiasm, displayed preliminary versions of their titles at the summer Consumer Electronics Show. The sprawling 3DO exhibit showcased 35 products from 17 publishers.

"Preliminary" is the operative word. Many of the titles we're previewing are still fairly incomplete. Crystal Dynamics, which is kissing close to the 3DO, has its projects moving toward Alpha stage (a playable, reasonably complete demo), but most other titles are still in the early stage of the development process.

Sci-Fi Super-Games

It's fitting that this system, which goes where no interactive technology has gone before, should have so many science fiction titles in the design pipeline. These are the most interesting of the futuristic disks:

Take to the realms of deep space with the crew of the starship Enterprise.

Star Trek: The Next Generation (Spectrum Holobyte) takes a strikingly original approach to bringing the television series to the gaming screen. The characters resemble three-dimensional puppets, based on the main cast members, that move in an incredibly lifelike manner. The set for the *Enterprise* bridge and the animated transporter sequence are visually powerful.

Microcosm (Psygnosis) has the hottest action of any title **EG** previewed. Derived from the same concept as a floppy title also in development, this is an incredibly realistic sci-fi game full of space ships and hot-looking cut scenes.

Shock Wave: Invasion Earth 2014 (Electronic Arts) is a space flight simulator in the classic tradition of that genré. The outer space graphics appear large on the screen and beautifully animated.

Not all entries take such a combative view of interstellar encounters. Terraforming newly discovered planets is the focus of **World Builders, Inc.** (Electronic Arts). Sid Mead modeled the command

Shock Wave: Invasion Earth 2014 lets players rip through a space flight sim.

ship in this space-faring strategy game. The program has two modes, real science and science fiction. The former is so well-researched that EA expects **World Builders, Inc.** to generate some edutainment sales, too.

The 3DO edition of **Jurassic Park** (MCA) makes the player chief engineer of the dinosaur attraction, and the whole game centers on the island's control room. Using monitors and remote technology, the player must save the 40 people trapped in the prehistoric park after the power goes down.

Park Place, best known for sports games like **John Madden Football**, breaks new ground with the 3-D Adventures Series, starting with **Project X**. The cyberpunk epic won't be out for some time, but it could be a landmark. Park Place constructed an entire city in which to set this game, which offers the most sophisticated graphics this side of the latest big budget SF film.

USO 2015 (MCA) is a cartoon-style SF romp. The player rides a skateboard through the air in this arcade-adventure game.

Multimedia Fantasies

Publishers aren't giving fantasy as much attention in their 3DO product lines

World Builders, Inc., by Electronic Arts, utilizes strategy and science fiction.

as they are devoting to science fiction. One reason is that SF lends itself better to the highly realistic graphics that are sure to become a trademark of this platform's software.

The 7th Guest, Part II: The 11th Hour (Virgin) is the sequel to this year's exceptional multimedia program. The story carries the premise into the present, 70 years after the events of the first title. Mean old Mr. Stauf is still there and up to no good. The full motion video (FMV) sequences are strongly influenced by David Lynch's Twin Peaks TV show and film.

Futuristic racing cars will quicken the pulse of those willing to Crash 'N Burn.

Dracula (Psygnosis) will swoop onto the platform next winter, with evocative visuals and eerie music. Psygnosis says that it will not be a punch-and-kick action game like the computer title of the same name.
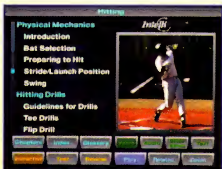
Sports titles are ready to hit the 3DO field. Get ready for the competition!

The Sports Lineup

Demographics for 3DO are expected to skew older than the video game universe. Accordingly, good sports games will be even more important in attracting the audience during the hardware's critical first year on the market. The follwing include some of the most intriguing of the announced products. Sports fans should be quite satisfied!

3-D Football (Electronic Arts) is a Park Place design, and that's always good news for gridiron gamers. The primary visual point of view is an on-the-field perspective with the camera set behind the offensive team. Users can reposition the camera to create any desired viewing angle.

The benchmark for all pigskin simulations, John Madden Football (Electronic Arts), is also headed for 3DO. Expect the solid gold play-mechanics to change little, but the sound, graphics, and frills will be monumental.

Crash 'N Burn (Crystal Dynamics) is a multi-player racing game. The driver can flip between cockpit perspective and a view from behind the car. A variety of cars compete on 30 tracks. The cars are texture mapped with 20,000 polygons, and the race is extremely fast.

PGA Tour Golf (Electronic Arts) brings the well-liked golf simulation to the new platform. It boasts the largest golfers ever seen in a sports title!


The links come to life on the screen with 3DO's exciting technology.

Black Box Brain Games

Twisted (Electronic Arts), a multi-game package, has puzzle, trivia, and arcade contests. The trivia game has approximately 3,000 Q&As. Zapper is the most unusual action title in the anthology. The player fires a remote control device at a bank of T.V. sets to blot out those unwanted commercials.

Edutainment

Entertainment is the largest software category in the 3DO catalog, but edutainment is strongly represented. Fall-winter offerings include both original designs and ports from other systems.
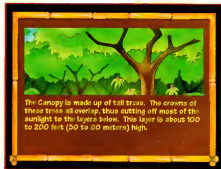
Shelly Duvall lends her voice to the 3DO version of It's A Bird's Life.

BusyTown (Paramount), for ages 3-7, is an exploration of a charmingly drawn little town. BusyTown is filled with child-pleasing activities. It's from the same design/development team that did Ecco The Dolphin and the forthcoming Peter Pan for Electronic Arts.

It's A Bird's Life (Sanctuary Woods) is a port of the excellent computer product. Shelly Duvall's narration is wonderful.

That's Entertainment!

Games aren't the only way to have fun with 3DO. The new mix includes numerous products which aren't games, but which nonetheless promise hours of pleasurable puttering.

CPU Bach (Microprose) writes music in the style of J.S. Bach for any mood and occasion. The compositions are original, and no two are alike. The program can also generate a variety of visuals, including a lava-lamp effect. CPU Bach also makes use of the 65,000 pictures available as part of the basic 3DO library to present visual accompaniment to its musical compositions.

If playing golf is more your thing than playing a fugue, Intellimedia is readying a series of interactive instructional programs. There will be a whole series of baseball tutorials conducted by college coach extraordinaire George Frazier, plus similar products for football and golf. And if you like your sports more sedentary, there's a disk to teach better technique in the casinos.

The Wrap-Up

That's our first look at new technology. Electronic Games will track the progress on these projects and report on them as they progress to alpha and beta stages. There's a new era coming in the hobby, and 3DO looks like the prime catalyst.

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by the Editors of Electronic Games

Our Editors Pick the Best New Games

Christmas comes early in the electronic entertainment world. Makers of video, computer, multimedia, and portable games unwrapped their most spectacular new entries at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show (SCES). More than 50,000 delegates braved wind, cold, and driving rain to jam the North Hall of Chicago's McCormick Place during the first week of June. Another 50,000 rank-and-file gamers paid $10 a pop to cruise the wild aisles on the final day.

Clay Fighter, with its unique animation, was one of the many hits at the CES.

Six EG editors spent nearly a week of 18-hour days looking at the cutting-edge of interactive electronic entertainment. The result is our consensus picks for the hottest funware on its way to market this fall and winter.

The Best Video Games

The 1993 holiday season is slated to be the most successful in the 16-Bit era. Sega has a very strong product lineup (see details next issue) and appears likely to retain the top spot for the foreseeable future. Nintendo isn't standing still, either, although it has declined to jump on the multimedia or virtual reality bandwagon. Designers and developers are

learning to maximize the hardware, even as new chips increase many system capabilities.

Sega announced a new chip, essentially its answer to Nintendo's SFX, but it did not show any games based on it. That should be a highlight of the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas next January.

And now, the top choices for the Summer CES...

Brett Hull Hockey
Accolade
SNES

Electronic Arts has dominated the hockey video game market for several years with **NHLPA Hockey** and later refinements. That era may be ending. **Brett Hull Hockey** is the first serious challenger.

It's a wicked, on-the-ice hockey simulation that plays great and looks greater. Developed by Radical Entertainment, it's a slashing, body-checking classic. It sparkles with addictive game play, realistic sound effects, and superb visuals.

Brett Hull Hockey carries the NHLPA license, so it has all the teams and players. Even ace sportscaster Al Michaels is on board for play-by-play.

Brett Hull Hockey will be skating toward both the Genesis and SNES, but it was the SNES version that impressed **EG**'s editors at the show. Its eye-popping use of Mode 7 keeps the action flowing gave it the edge over other editions.

The designers moved the cameras down, to just above the ice, so that players skate into the distance, rather than scrolling vertically or horizontally. The skaters are large, and the action is authentically bruising.

It remains to be seen whether gamers will prefer **Brett Hull** to the latest edition of **NHLPA Hockey**. Some titles falter in the final stages of pre-publication, while others come out fine, but not quite as good as it seemed they could. At the least, **Brett Hull** has a chance to make a huge impact on electronic sports gaming.

Clay Fighter
Interplay
SNES

Fans of Will Vinton's animation, most widely seen in the California Raisins

commercials, will want a new series of games coming from **Interplay**. While the side-scroller **Clay-Mates** is delightful, **EG**'s editors reserved their loudest applause for this martial arts romp.

The characters in the 16-Meg title are aptly described as larger-than-life. Choose from among six characters, including an Elvis impersonator, for head-to-head battle against huge enemies.

Although the incredible detail and com-

ESPN Baseball will let players feel the intense action of pro baseball at home.

plexity of the animation is **Clay Fighter**'s most obvious selling point, the play-action is riveting, too. **Clay Fighter** incorporates many hidden moves and subtle combination attacks that should test the skill of any electronic black belt.

The violence owes more to cartoons than Norris and Seagal movies. When the fighters get hit, their bodies distort in highly amusing fashion.

ESPN Baseball Tonight
Sony Imagesoft
Genesis

ESPN, the national cable TV sports service, has watched the development of electronic sports games, but the network has stayed on the sidelines. It refused to lend its name to a product until the technology advanced to the level they felt was needed for a truly satisfying game. **ESPN Baseball Tonight**, by Park Place, shows ESPN may've had the right idea. Summer CES overflowed with terrific sports games. This game is championship caliber, even in such blurring, fast company.

The most remarkable thing about this game is its visual presentation. Gamers

will rub their eyes in disbelief at first sight of the beautifully modeled players and realistically articulated human movement. The pitcher, batter, and fielders' body language is on the same exalted level as the lifelike animation seen in **Prince of Persia**. The big difference is that these figures are, of course, much larger sprites.

ESPN Baseball Tonight capitalizes on the fame of the network's on-air personalities, studio sets, and even the ESPN theme music to foster the illusion of watching a game on TV.

Versions of this game are also being produced for the SNES and Sega CD. The game features real major league team logos and uniforms, though not the actual players. A new arcade baseball standard comes along only once every few years. This could be the one for the mid-1990s.

Jurassic Park
Ocean
SNES

Big-time licenses and cutting-edge gaming don't always go together. This could be a major exception.

Jurassic Park, based on the sensational Michael Crichton thriller and Steven Spielberg movie, is an innovative interactive experience. It's an encouraging sign that Ocean is ready to become a leading video game publisher.

How many times have developers warped an innovative game concept derived from a film into a generic platform contest? Ocean wound up keeping closer to the spirit of the novel than the movie, even integrating the book's celebrated use of chaos theory into the game play.

Grant, the hero, is a paleontologist who has several vital tasks to perform to complete the game. Dangers threaten constantly as Grant explores the attractions of the theme park from Hell. The main task is to collect the eggs which are being laid by supposedly sterile dinosaurs. Grant must also get the various buildings up and working.

Exterior scenes use an angled overhead perspective while the interior sequences employ a virtual reality-like, first-person view similar to the well-liked **Wolfenstein 3-D**.

Game play ranges widely over the entire island. The scientist encounters raptors, spitters, compys, a herd of stegasauri, and the inevitable T-Rex.

The sound rates high, too. This is the very first game to feature Dolby Surround Sound capability.

This game comes in the long line of movie-to-game translations, and pulls off the trick quite well. It is often difficult to recreate the incredible sights and sounds of hit movies, especially one with the outstanding special effects and sound effects seen and heard in Jurassic Park. Spielberg himself might be quite impressed with this game.

Kudos to Ocean for not taking the easy way out. The NES version, also from Ocean, is similarly excellent.

Mortal Kombat
Acclaim
Genesis

The chart-topper from the arcades will be coming home this September, with versions for the SNES, Genesis, Game Boy and Game Gear. **EG** liked the Genesis cartridge the best as of the Summer CES.

There is always a danger when transferring a hit arcade to the video format. The overall enjoyment one receives from the arcade versions is often hard to recreate on a smaller scale. However, SF2 pulled it off, and that paved the way for others.

Mortal Kombat takes martial arts to a new level on the video platform, featuring fantastic digitized footage and large-sized fighters that are absolutely great to view.

In Jurassic Park, players must help Grant escape from monsters gone wild.

The game includes seven warriors: Liu Kang, Johnny Cage, Kano, Sonya Blade, Rayden, Sub-Zero or Scorpion; they kick and punch through many battles.

Riddick Bowe Boxing
Extreme
SNES

Super Bowl and World Series heroes go to Disneyland. Apparently, heavyweight boxing champs have a different

Riddick Bowe is the latest champ to join the contenders in the video ring.

destination, the many video gaming screens of America.

The object is to create a customized pugilist and climb the ladder to the top of the boxing world. The player determines the contender's physical appearance (hair, skin, trunks, gloves, name) and adjusts capabilities (power, speed and stamina). The challenger fights through 25 ranked opponents to gain a shot at Bowe's title. The main screen shows detailed large fighters, pictured from hip up, with their features very well defined. Beneath this close-up is a face and torso window of each boxer, flanking a power bar for each. Above is a small image of the ring, with the fighters' miniaturized bodies shown in 3/4 overhead perspective for tracking the boxers in the ring. This set-up gives a close-up of punching exchanges without neglecting the effect of ring generalship.

The controls are smooth, and allow a variety of feints and dodges, plus punches and roundhouse blows accompanied by realistic sound effects. Perhaps the best part is the effect of the bouts on the fighters: they age as they advance through the tournament, and the power

ratings go up and down based on wins and losses. Options let the gamer choose to box from the left or right side of the screen, and there's even a setting for matching Riddick against himself, in a real test of power fighting.

RoboCop vs. Terminator
Virgin
Genesis

The fans always want more. They always yearn for the seemingly impossible match-up, whether it's boxers from different eras or comic book heroes from rival companies.

Pop culture is rife with hypothetical questions and debates. Can Alien beat Jason? The Predator could kick the Punisher's butt! Itchy & Scratchy would rule over Fievel and Mighty Mouse in an all-toon tag team match!

Profound musings like these inspired the Dark Horse Comics series, **RoboCop vs. Terminator**. Now the idea has led to the hottest shooter at the Consumer Electronics Show. Don't worry about the logic, just pick up a controller and dive into this pulse-pounding action contest.

The player becomes RoboCop in this platform twitch-fest. The armored avenger has the ability to fire in many directions with a wonderful assortment of sweet weaponry. RoboCop needs every shell and bullet to take out the most invincible bad guy this side of Charles Barkley.

Unfortunately, however, gamers don't get to control the Terminator. Reportedly, one of the license holders applied heat to prevent this option. It is claimed that it would be unsuitable to let young

RoboCop is about to meet his match when he faces off with the Terminator.

gamers role-play the villain of the piece. Outside of that one limitation, there's not much to criticize here.

Dramatic graphics, maximum play-action, and cool, pop culture characters make **RoboCop vs. Terminator** a guaranteed hit this winter.

Yahoo! Sonic's built-in speed will make this video pinball soar to new heights.

Sonic Spinball
Sega
Genesis

Those who thought the pinball sequences were the highlight of **Sonic 2**, rejoice! **Sonic Spinball** is more of the same, and then some. This brilliantly conceived game thoroughly explores the possibilities of electronic pinball.

Some attempts to put familiar characters into new contexts just don't seem to work out right. **Pac Man II** (see next issue for details), doesn't capture the essence of the manic muncher, but no one could claim the same about **Sonic Spinball**.

All the characters, including everyone's favorite hedgehog, are here. Tails, Dr. Robotnik and the rest are all involved in a wild chase through Robotnik's Veg-O Fortress. The robot factory is built inside, and powered by, an active volcano.

Sonic is one heavy duty hedgehog in this third video gaming cartridge. Dressed in a pair of gangsta-fashionable Power Sneakers, he's souped-up with a Sonic Spin Attack and several other new moves.

This is Sonic's journey from one crazy pinball environment to another. The game moves at dizzying speed with the excitement of the best electronic pinball.

The Best Computer Games

Don't mothball that 386 yet! Although some programs don't run well on anything less than a 486, a lot of publishers are reluctant to abandon the millions of consumers who have a 386sx. Support for the recently introduced 586 hasn't materialized yet, but that should change over the next six months.

A lot of publishers are using their computer game projects to tool up for multimedia. As a result, there are quite a few games that feature audiovisual effects that far surpass titles introduced as recently as 1992.

Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Father
Sierra
MS-DOS
Stepping into the elfin boots of Roberta Williams on **King's Quest VI** did not daunt Jane Jensen. This excursion into horror adventure indicates that a new star has just arrived on the adventure gaming scene.

It all starts with a macabre nightmare. As the terrified dreamer, the computerist sees a woman being burned alive who morphs into a leopard. Then the view shifts to a grim scene of a hanged man. Heady stuff to start a gruesome, mysterious adventure!

The plot concerns a writer in New Orleans, who learns about a voodoo murder that happened 300 years earlier. The intrepid scribe becomes a sleuth when he sets out to solve the mystery.

Sierra has utilized letter box graphics

Gabriel Knight must find out who is behind some grisly vodoo murders.

which heightens the cinematic feel. A CD-ROM version of **Gabriel Knight**, recently announced for next winter, incorporates verbalizations for all characters, but the sound and music of the floppy version are excellent, too.

Sierra is now unalterably committed to icon-driven interface. The latest generation introduced in this program, now breaks the "Do" command into four functions (pick up, look, etc.) for easier use. There's lots of conversations with locals to provide necessary clues, as the writer investigates a series of ritual murders, the voodoo cult, and a romance.

Gabriel Knight's vigorous graphics and exotic story set it apart from the usual Sierra On-Line titles, most of which are much lighter in tone.

Indy car fans are sure to be pleased with the updated version of Indy 500.

Indy Car Racing
Papyrus
MS-DOS
The same design/development group that did **Indy 500** is back at the track. This time, they're publishing the results under their own label. **Indy Car Racing** is better in many ways than **Indy 500**.

The improvements start with the automotive drawings. This action-simulation features large cars composed of texture-mapped polygons. The disk includes eight complete tracks. Papyrus promises an add-on disk, with an equal number of courses, for sometime in 1994.

Papyrus makes the most of the license by producing an exacting replica of the famed Indianapolis track and the cars. Even the billboards that line the lanes are included!

The player can take his car to the garage for bumper to bumper customizing. The driver can select tires, fuel, wings (front or rear), stagger, suspension, and the engine. The result is a car that bears the operator's personal stamp.

The animation rate is a speedy 15 frames per second on 486 computers. Papyrus claims **Indy Car Racing** unreels at the same rate on the 386, if some of the visual details, such as texture mapping of the grass, the billboards, and the car itself, are suppressed.

An important feature these days is telecommunication support. **Indy Car Racing** is modem enabled, and the company has a BBS for real-time racing.

Papyrus is currently working on

Computer Game of the Show

Stonekeep
Interplay
MS-DOS
To paraphrase a well-known commercial, you'll swear this is multimedia, but it's not. **Stonekeep** may redefine state-of-the-art for computer RPGs.

Finally, here is a game with a totally invisible interface. The first-person POV fills the entire screen, with no distracting windows, icons, or hit point counters to mar the reality of the experience. **Stonekeep**, from Interplay (creators of **Bard's Tale**, **Battlechess**, and **Castles**), is the most cinematic RPG ever produced. The mouse controls the player-character's hands (and whatever they're holding in those hands) while the keyboard direction keys guide the p.c.'s feet.

Stonekeep encompasses 13 different domains with an automapping feature to keep track of where the party has been. Producer Michael Quarles and his development team invested ten man-years in the creation of this breakthrough game, and it shows. **Stonekeep** is perhaps the most accessible RPG in the history of electronic entertainment.

March Madness is coming soon to PCs. Concentration is the key on free throws.

technology which they hope will link up to 33 players in spectacular head-to-head races. Meanwhile, we'll all have this streamlined simulation to enjoy.

NCAA Basketball: Road to the Final Four 2
Bethesda
MS-DOS
Bethesda was the most improved computer game publisher at the Summer CES. This is one of the reasons why.

No electronic basketball simulation has ever captured the essence of the sport the way **John Madden Football** (EA/Genesis) did for the gridiron. **NCAA Basketball** could change that forever. It's that good.

Bethesda was extremely unhappy with the original version of **NCAA Basketball**, and vowed to get it right the second time around. They have fulfilled that vow with the most realistic five-on-five roundball simulation in the history of interactive entertainment.

Each player is controlled by an individual AI engine based on actual NCAA statistics, while the on-screen, digitized b-ballers and user-selectable camera angles provide an astonishingly high level of visual realism. The game employs a 360-degree, 3-D graphics environment and the exclusive VoxFX multi-layer digital sound technology to heighten the sense of watching human beings playing on a real basketball court.

This is an amazing achievement from one of the best publishers around.

SimCity 2000
Maxis
MS-DOS, Macintosh

Few games have a more devoted core of players than **SimCity**. This upgraded version of **SimCity** on the way lets users design even more detailed urban areas with enhanced graphics, special features, and all new disasters.

SimCity 2000 offers a built-in terrain editor and an angled visual perspective more reminiscent of **Populous** than the original **SimCity**. There's also a zoom option which provides detailed close-ups of any selected area, nine types of power plants (including solar power, which is really only useful as a backup energy system), subways, schools, and an impressive range of alternative options. There's also a special mode for viewing construction underground, especially helpful when building a subway system. Users can even construct tunnels through mountainsides when necessary. And though Godzilla doesn't appear on command to trash the urban landscape, there is a UFO attack which can be staged by clicking on the disaster menu.

Although upgraded versions of existing products rarely make a best-of-show listing such as this, **SimCity 2000** is such a remarkable reworking of a classic theme that it unquestionably belongs among the elite products listed here.
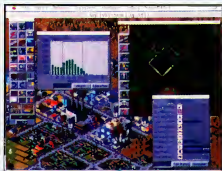
SimCity 2000 challenges players to thrive with future urban technology.

The Terminator: Rampage
Bethesda Softworks
MS-DOS
The graphics are blazing hot in this sequel to **Terminator 2029**. It was one of the most intense action games on computer at the Chicago exhibition.

Skynet returns as the adversary. The

mission is to destroy the machine in a high-action contest, fortified with role-playing elements.

Bethesda's revamped weapon system and rotational battle engine provide the fireworks through 32 levels. The art is spectacularly animated, and the sound is dynamic.
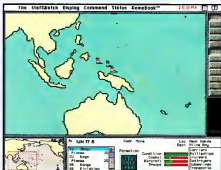
Victory at Sea is a tactical sea combat game that will challenge all comers.

Victory at Sea
Three Sixty
MS-DOS
Victory at Sea, produced with help from Jim Dunnigan, has the best strategic command control for the WWII Pacific theater produced to date. Play begins the day after Pearl Harbor and continues until one side claims victory.

VAS uses the V4V logistics model and the revised auto-navigation routines which will also be found in **Harpoon II**. The game depicts the whole Pacific Theater, from the Panama Canal to India and the Aleutians to Australia.

VAS isn't tactical like **Harpoon**. The gamer serves as an operational commander. Major activities are plotting the grand strategy, supervising new construction, assessing logistics and evaluating intelligence and damage reports. Players can delegate any of these functions to staff assistants, if desired.

The artificial intelligence, so vital to the enjoyment of solitaire gamers, is outstanding. Head-to-head play is still the best experience, but the extensive AI makes **Victory at Sea** one of the most challenging games you can play against the machine. No landlubbers will thrive on the open sea during combat!

The Best Multimedia Games

Multimedia games are increasing in quality and number each month. Here's a look at some of the winners at CES.

Dracula Unleashed
ICOM Simulations
CD-ROM (also Macintosh CD)
Over 135 scenes of live action, and a total of 96 minutes of video to create a five-day mission to find and destroy Dracula in Victorian England. This vampiric encounter includes alternate plot paths and multiple endings. The outcome depends on the player's wit and helpful items from inventory.

ICOM hired script writers and professional actors to insure the quality of the
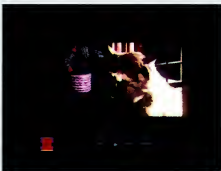
Dracula returns, this time with ICOM's programming genius behind him.

full-motion video. It even rented a large wolf! It took a month of filming in Minneapolis to create the absolutely outstanding visuals.

The atmospheric tale is set ten years after the ending of Bram Stoker's masterpiece, and characters from the book join new personalities, as they try to identify and kill the Count.

The special care shows throughout the game, especially with sets and costuming. The style and decor is true to its period.

The interface is intuitive. Travel around London is a snap: a click on the beautifully rendered map produces a message of how long the trip will take then transports the player to that spot.

Dracula Unleashed is the first product

that truly captures the Bram Stoker character, along with the soul-stinging horror associated with the many myths and tales of the dreaded vampire.

Godzilla
Turbo Technologies, Inc.
DUO SuperCD
With blockbusters like **Street Fighter II** and **Mortal Kombat** around, a new martial arts game needs something special to get noticed. This one's got it.

Godzilla stars the famous Japanese movie monsters in a punch-kick-stomp festival. One or two gamers choose a behemoth, then use its special moves (radioactive fire, spinning tail drop, etc.) in a creature-to-creature confrontation that echoes the more ludicrous scenes in Godzilla movies.

Mortal Kombat
Acclaim
Sega CD
While all three of Acclaim's home conversions of the Bally/Williams coin-op mega-hit (SNES, Genesis, and Sega CD) are impressive, the Sega CD version of **Mortal Kombat** comes closest to reproducing the arcade game in all its gory glory. Two combatants, seen from a side perspective, take one another on in a **Street Fighter**-like orgy of martial arts mayhem. There is the usual rogue's gallery of opponents, including the awesome challenge of Shang-Tsung, a shape-shifter who can assume the physical appearance and abilities of all the game's opponents.

What made **Mortal Kombat** so unique in the arcades is also the keynote in the home versions: the combatants are all

Mortal Kombat will appear on the Sega CD to challenge fighters of all ranks.

rendered as large, digitized figures, giving the game a level of realism not found in the other street combat contests. The SNES version and, especially, this Sega CD conversion, also add the beautifully contrasting backgrounds, with their oriental art motif providing the perfect counterpoint to the foreground fighting. This title will be welcome on the Sega CD.

Myst
Broderbund
Macintosh CD-ROM
Early in the CD-ROM era, two brothers dazzled the tiny audience of pioneers

Multimedia Game of the Show

Lethal Enforcers
Konami
Sega CD
Good, solid shooters are a category sorely lacking in the multimedia arena. Even the Sega CD system has surprisingly little software for gamers who want to take out their frustrations by blasting sprites off the screen.

Enter Konami's Sega CD version of its smash coin-op, **Lethal Enforcers**, in which the player is cast as a law enforcement officer battling against an army of street thugs with the help of a pistol-style light gun. A plastic six-shooter light weapon will actually be enclosed with every game, thereby totally recreating all the thrills and action of the arcade game.

Digitized, on-screen bad guys turn up in cars, behind windows, and in a variety of appropriately felonious postures, and it's up to the player to take them out without wasting any innocent bystanders. This is a spectacular target-oriented twitch game, with all the pulse-pounding, mindless entertainment value a gamer could hope for in one package. So settle back and wait for one or more of its urban thugs to make your day.

Lethal Enforcers will also be released on the Genesis and SNES in cartridge format.

Myst is a magical world where good reading skills will come in very handy.

with **The Manhole**. Rand and Robyn Miller's game demonstrated point-and-click adventuring without the headaches of typing. The Millers further refined their approach in **Cosmic Osmo**, **Spelunx** and **Caves of Mr. Seudo**.

Their latest, **Myst**, allows players to explore an incredibly rich world. And there's an intricate story behind the dazzling graphics and special effects.

Myst is the magical world in which the game unfolds. When the player is able to reconstruct books, they transport him to other worlds, where the author's sons have become trapped in mystical tomes. The gamer must search the various parallel worlds to find the red and blue pages that reveal the brothers' story and also uncover the mystery of their father's disappearance.

Myst is unique in many ways. The colorful 3-D graphics are fully rendered in

The PC favorite, Stellar 7, is coming soon to the Sega CD as Stellar Fire. The intense battle action will be retained.

photographic realism. A flexible structure lets adventurers explore Myst without trying to solve the mystery. The Millers designed and produced the program mostly on their own, along with some technical assistance. It represents two years of work and a whole lot of rendering. The non-threatening environment and open game system captivate players in a matter of minutes and entertain for countless hours. **The 7th Guest** opened players' eyes to the future of CD-ROM technology for entertainment. **Myst** leapfrogs Trilobyte's hit game and takes CD-ROM to the edge of virtual reality.

Stellar Fire
Dynamix
Sega CD
What do you get when you cross **Stellar 7** with **Nova 9**? The exact details are still in flux, but count on plenty of first-person shooting. **Stellar Fire** gives players the same type of intense experience as the two earlier games, but enhanced to take advantage of the capabilities of the new format.

As a pilot in the Stellar Force, all you've got to do is polish your legend is save the Earth. All this requires is annihilating six moons' defense shields and destroying the communication and defense systems on the planet. Did I mention that you'll be assaulting this mighty interstellar empire with just one ship? If saving the world were easy, everyone would want to be a hero.

It's a flying and shooting first-person action extravaganza, featuring beautiful polygon-based 3-D graphics and outstanding special effects and explosions. The pilot must explore the surfaces of the moons to locate the enemies, and the fast battles make good tests of the shooter's skills.

The audio portion of the game isn't as far along as game play and graphics. The original musical score has a driving, insistent quality that goes well with the action,

and there's some use of digitized speech.

Hot action games aren't common in multimedia yet. **Stellar Fire** is a really good one.
Voyeur
Phillips
CD-I
Analysts may question the viability of this multimedia system, but here's a


Voyeur contains lengthy portions of live video, which gives it a movie-like feel.

piece of gameware that is making everyone take notice.

Voyeur stars Robert Culp and Grace Zabriskie in a Hitchcockian murder mystery. The title refers to the player, who is a surveillance investigator, a whiz with camera, video tape, bugs, and microphones. The player peeks at various rooms in a sprawling mansion to gather clues about events occurring there over a weekend.

Former astronaut Reed Hawke would like to run for president, but there's treachery afoot. The successful player may be able to figure out what family member is to be killed, and actually stop the murder. But, the user can choose to just view the story, or become a character in the story. This special feature is a unique twist to most adventure-gaming fare that comes off quite well.

The technology is exciting. **Voyeur** contains over an hour of video, plus 3-D-generated graphic, audio and sound effects. **Voyeur** may not have the power to transform CD-I into a mass market success, but this cinematic adventure is the harbinger of the next generation of multimedia entertainment. Look for future releases of such games to be quite hot.
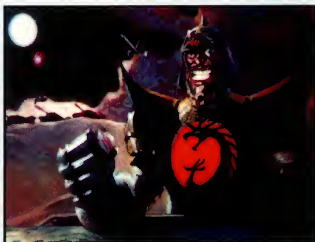
The Best Portable Games

The balance of power in the portable field appears to be shifting. Nintendo is still on top with the black and white Game Boy, but Sega's color portable Game Gear has established itself in the last 12 months. The Lynx, marketed by Atari, is still alive, though the company declines to discuss its future plans in the portable area.
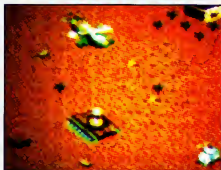
Batman: The Animated Series
Konami
Game Boy

Batman confronts the Joker, Mr. Freeze, Catwoman, The Penguin, and other Gotham City bad guys in this superb adaptation of the animated TV series. No Game Boy cartridge boasts better artwork and graphics than this five-level platform game. It does an admirable job of evoking the feel of the Fox series.

Each of the first four scenarios comprises a complete "episode." The final sequence is a battle royal in which Batman challenges all five Gotham crime bosses.

Konami has gone to great lengths to insure that this cartridge offers players the same style, look, and dramatic structure as the TV show (which just happens to be the number one show among the 2-to-11 and teen-age groups), and it has

Desert Strike was a success on the Genesis, and is coming for Game Gear.

succeeded. The animated TV show is, in many ways, a throwback to an earlier, less psychotic, Batman, and this game revels in Batman's status as a hero, rather than stressing his trendier, Dark Knight image.

Desert Strike
Domark
Game Gear

When Electronic Arts released the original Genesis edition in 1992, **Desert Strike** attained cult status. Its ray-traced graphics and sandswept scenery made it a favorite of most action gamers. Now Game Gear owners can find out what caused all the excitement.

Although designed before the Gulf War, **Desert Strike** foreshadows events and scenarios that subsequently happened in the actual conflict. A typical example is the mission to guide an Apache combat chopper into an enemy-held city to rescue an American TV news crew—with uncanny prescience. **Desert Strike** adapts surprisingly well to portable form. This excellent 4-meg conversion by Domark really shows off the machine's capabilities. The play system is faithful to the original, as is the angled overhead perspective. Gamers must pilot an AH-64 Apache gunship on a series of increasingly difficult attack and rescue missions. Take out communications bases, air fields, and P.O.W. camps, while rescuing stranded allies. Kind of a 3-D update to **Choplifter**, **Desert Strike** is a powerfully compelling game experience.

Domark will also be producing a Game Gear version of the sequel, **Jungle Strike**, in the spring of '94.

Portable Game of the Show

Sonic Chaos
Sega
Game Gear

Sega hopes to sell 1.5 million Game Gear units, giving them 40% of the portable business, in second-half 1993. These are some of the new software titles that Sega hopes will keep demand for its color hand-held booming. Sonic games have done especially well on the Game Gear, and the company hopes **Sonic Chaos** will continue this tradition.

The Sonic cast is caught up in a chase after magical jewels. Robotnik intends to use the gems to create a nuclear weapon. Many will think that's a pretty ordinary thing to do with a bunch of enchanted gemstones, but you can throw the story out the window. This game is about raw speed and high-voltage arcade thrills.

Gamers control either Sonic or Tails in **Sonic Chaos**. Sonic has his incredible speed while Tails can fly over the scrolling landscape. Either character can scoop up lots of ultra-cool bonus items, including rocket shoes and a pogo stick.

Sonic 2 drew some criticism for overly hard sections, though the game won overall approval from most players. We won't know until fall whether **Sonic Chaos** has similar bottlenecks, but it has the potential to be a game-of-the-year contender.

Sonic Chaos, for the Game Gear, will treat fans to some super moves.
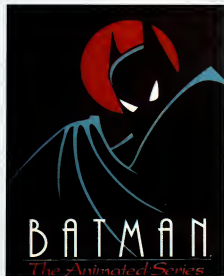
The Best Edutainment Games

Edutainment products leaped to the fore as a major product category at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show. There are more new ways to learn than ever, and the emphas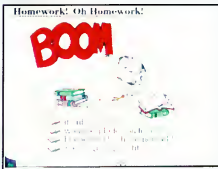is is definitely on graphics, music and ease of operation. Electronic storybooks with plenty of clickable spots; games with educational content, and activity collections dominate the field.

Broderbund's New Kids on the Block will help children with reading skills.

The New Kids on the Block
Broderbund
CD-ROM, Macintosh CD

This is the third in the Living Book series. **The New Kids on the Block** features 18 poems by Jack Prelutsky. The program reads the poems aloud and highlights the words as they are spoken. Clever cartoons accompany each.

There's more. The child can click on each noun and see it illustrated, or on each verb to get an animation of that word. There are literally dozens of these hidden pictures and animations inside each poem.

The interface is child-simple, good for players as young as six. Despite this, the entertainment content is engrossing enough to keep older kids interested. The poems are cute and funny, and the learning experience is completely painless as children expand their vocabularies, learn definitions of words, and get practice with their reading skills. It will entertain and educate children with its rich programming and ease of use.

Seven Days in August is sure to be an interesting and informative game.

Seven Days In August
EduQuest
CD-ROM

This interactive history was created in cooperation with Time Warner Interactive. It was originally for conventional computers, but this version makes the most of newly available technology.

This is a deep and amazingly detailed program for students of all ages. It presents, in a documentary format, cultural background of the Cold War era, that tense period of the 1960's when war with the Soviet Union seemed inevitable, and the events of the final week in August 1961 before the Wall was built.

Lots of social data is included, along with the political history. The Space Race, the start of the Peace Corp, civil rights, rock 'n' roll, even sports are profiled, and the whole montage of data and images make the program come to life.

Multimedia lends excitement to this already emotional subject. Popup windows, pull-down databanks, interviews, round-table discussions, live-action news-

reels, and even two games, are used to present a dramatic picture of the era. Those who lived through it will find their pulse rising as the tensions increase. Students just learning about it will get a great history lesson which concludes with a happy ending: the demolition of the Wall in 1989. The history of the Soviet Union is sure to affect its future, and this release will help users to be informed about this still-powerful and volatile nation.

The title includes important data and a political history of the Cold War.

The Best Edutainment Title of the Show

Peter Pan: A Story Painting Adventure
Electronic Arts/EA*Kids
Macintosh, MS-DOS, CD-ROM, MAC CD, 3DO

This product is more toy than teacher, yet some time with this charming program can improve a young (ages 5-12) user's skills in reading, understanding cause-and-effect, and problem solving. The reading level adjusts for a wide variety of skill levels, to keep it interesting for many play sessions.

It's a graphic adventure that emphasizes interactive cartoons. Instead of an inventory of swords, potions and spells, the role-player has a set of animated paint box tools that react in different ways to different situations, and thus solve problems.

If the child chooses the drawing pencil, it might trace a balloon around the offending obstacle and have it float away. Or the pencil might draw a swarm of bees to drive off a villain. Other tools include such art box mainstays as the spray painter, the paint brush, an eraser, and even an hour glass that can alter time at critical moments.

NovaTrade's animations are sparkling. The story of Peter Pan, Wendy and Captain Hook is still a certified kid-pleaser. The clever cartoons and inventive solutions to the obstacles make this amusing entertainment that teaches kids while they play.

"BRIDGE"ING THE GAP
THE CONFRONTATION OF THE CARD GAMES!

by Ed Dille

Making sense of the morass of Bridge products currently on the market is daunting in terms of sheer numbers. Players also lack any form of in-store testing and must rely on competing packaging hype to make their purchase decisions.

With most other types of products, the subject matter or company reputation with similar titles is sufficient to placate their fears, but bridge enthusiasts must look to other sources for input.

Frankly, every product on the shelf claims to be the best at one aspect of the game or another. Further, many of these contenders are also marketed by

software houses of high repute. In reality, however, smaller publishers that specialize in Bridge software fare better in the final evaluation.

When it comes to bells and whistles, these programs range from glamorous to Spartan. Purists who care nothing for program appearance and are interested only in how well each one plays should focus primarily on ratings for bidding, play and speed. The latter is an important factor because in games like Bridge slow play detracts from enjoyment exponentially.

Players' options are as varied as the signals that may pass between partners, but the right program will help them make the correct bid and win the hand that suits their needs. So, let's have a look at the latest bridge offerings.

Meet the Expert

Electronic Games sought the expertise of Mr. Brent Manley of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) as an independent consultant on the strengths and weaknesses of bidding and play for each product. Brent Manley is editorial manager of *The Bulletin*, the monthly magazine of the ACBL. (For information write ACBL, 2990 Airways Blvd., Memphis, TN 38116-3847.) In his four years with ACBL, Mr. Manley has written extensive criticisms of bridge books and programs. He has tested virtually every program on the market and is often consulted by ACBL members on software purchases. Manley is a Life Master of the game with nearly 3000 masterpoints and a regular player in national tournaments. In the accompanying table, he provides the individual rankings for each program for the categories of bidding, play and speed.

Mr. Manley's interpretation of the **EG** grading scale is as follows:

• 96-100—Performs far in excess of current standards. Few, if any, "boners," such as winning with the Ace when holding the AQJ over a King.

Bridge fanatics can now quickly sneak in a game with the new Bridge Brain.

• 81-95—Better than average. Serious lapses, such as discarding from Qxxx in a suit when AKJx is in dummy, kept to a minimum.
• 66-80—Average, a few more boners per session than normal.
• 46-65—Below Average. Violates many principles of good play and has serious lapses frequently.
• 31-45—Serious flaws in programming. Software appears to have no concept of dummy play and/or defense.

Bidding is evaluated on a similar scale with the higher rankings indicating sophisticated reliable adherence to recognized conventions. Lower grades indicate poor programming in the language of bidding. Mr. Manley elaborates on how he reached some of these conclusions in the accompanying sidebar.

The table combines his objective assessment of these factors with a more subjective appraisal of program features.

Bridge Games Ratings Comparison

	Graphics	Sound	Bidding	Play	Speed	Overall
Micro Bridge Companion	82	—	86	94	94	90
Grand Slam Bridge II	86	88	85	90	96	89
Bridge Buff*	65	—	96	82	96	84
Bridge Brain for Windows	72	—	72	78	90	78
Hoyle Classic Card Games	86	88	78	72	60	77
Omar Sharif on Bridge	82	86	72	60	80	76
Bridge Master	88	88	60	45	92	75
Bridge 7.0	78	—	60	45	65	62

* **Bridge Buff** suffers from a limitation that the others do not. Specifically, the program plays only as defender, never as declarer.

Rating the Contenders

by Brent Manley

In today's market, there is no software program that allows a computer to play Bridge really well. At best, a program keeps egregious errors to a relative minimum. One reason for this is that good bridge is an enormously intricate exercise. Moreover, much of what an experienced player digests in the course of decision making is subjective—knowing a specific opponent's tendencies or sensing tension at the table at a critical moment. None of these factors can be adequately reproduced in a computer program. However, less experienced players can often learn a lot from many of the programs on the market.

In ranking the programs with which I am familiar for **EG**, I made several observations. Starting with my first choice, **Micro Bridge Companion** (Great Game Products), players should know that this program is now in its fifth revision. It has progressed in each step—adding extra bidding tools and eliminating many of the bonehead plays that make users groan. **MBC** has a variety of different features for play, a bidding flow chart and a method of storing deals for later replay.

Grand Slam Bridge II (Electronic Arts) can rock along, looking like an expert and playing with panache, and then lapse into a hopelessly silly error. Overall, however, it bids and plays just a notch below **MBC**.

Bridge Buff's (BridgeWare) bidding is quite sophisticated and it performs admirably as a defender (partially by peeking at the declarer's hand), but it is not a full program like the others.

The new Windows version of **Bridge Brain** (George Bodnar) is a vast improve-

Bridge Buff offers a unique and complex bidding style for the die-hard player.

ment over two previous editions, and the extra large display would benefit anyone with a vision problem. **Bridge Brain** plays moderately well compared to the others, but the bidding needs some more sophistication.

The **Hoyle** (Sierra) game is capable of making intelligent plays, such as ducking a trick it could win when it's right to do so (a rarity in computer bridge games), but it also produces some serious errors. The basis of a good program is there, however, and players should watch for updated versions.

Omar Sharif (Interplay) comes with audio capability—the player hears a voice somewhat similar to Mr. Sharif's

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Other Options

Exclusive of the computer software discussed, Saitek produces three stand-alone Bridge products that were evaluated exclusive of the software titles. Two of these, the **Bridge Shadow** and **Pro Bridge 310**, are hand-held units that play quality ACOL and Standard 5-card major bridge on LCD readouts.

The third, the **Pro-Bridge 510**, is a table top model whose performance, both in bidding and play, equals the best of the software titles mentioned in the accompanying story. The **510** supports five major bidding conventions: Standard American 4- and 5-card majors, ACOL, French 5-card majors and Precision Club. Additionally, there are 10 levels of skill in rubber bridge and a duplicate bridge option. The computer does not peek at other hands unless the player invokes that option to further challenge his or her playing skills. The major drawback to the **510**, however, is its price tag. At nearly $400 a copy, only the most serious bridge enthusiasts will commit the resources to own one of these machines.

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bidding and offering congratulations on winning tricks. The gamer may want to ask Omar why the program plays so badly but all he will say is "that was good play." Serious gaffes are the rule rather than the exception.

In one test deal of Capstone's **Bridge Master**, the computer played in four spades doubled and went down two when it should have made three overtricks. Similar silliness was perpetuated on every other deal. The standard of play

**Bridge Brain takes on all comers in the Windows version. Will you bid or pass?**

for this program was shockingly bad.

Bridge 7.0 (Artworx) committed major, embarrassing errors on every deal during a brief test. Even the rankest beginner would look askance at the screen after some of these boners. Also, unless the audio is turned off, there's an annoying screech before every bid. This program needs a major overhaul.
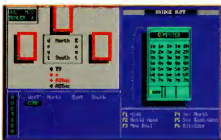
VIDEO GAME PREVIEW

General Chaos

PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Combat
MEGABITS	8 MEG
PLAYERS	1–4
LEVELS	51

An Advance Look At A Work In Progress

General Chaos is an experimental new release from Electronic Arts that combines arcade gunplay with sophisticated strategy elements to fashion what might be the next cult sensation.

General Chaos is also the first game designed specifically for use with EA's new four-way control pad peripheral which doubles the controller capacity for the Genesis.

This stylized version of post-modern warfare pits Moronican commander General Chaos against Vicerian strongman General Havoc. Their soldiers are as specialized as chess pieces, each type of fighter trained relentlessly to master a single weapon. As a result, large-scale battles have become obsolete, with most conflicts taking the form of skirmishes between mobile five-man squads or two-man commando teams.

General Chaos can be played solitaire, against the computer, or head to head, with each human player guiding the destiny of one army. Even better, however, is the two-player cooperative mode, with a pair of human players battling against a computer-controlled army. The four-player adapter, meanwhile, allows a pair of two-player teams to go against one another in the ultimate manifestation of **General Chaos**.

Players are advised to start off at Boot Camp, where they can learn the fine points of specialized warfare, including Squad Control, Using Weapons, Close Combat, Medical Staff, and Commandos.

Once the fundamentals have been mastered, the Attacking Army selects the battle site by tossing a dart at a map. As the front line pushes forward, attack sites are placed nearer and nearer to the enemy capital.

Next, the gamer selects the squad from four available types: Assault Team, Commandos, Demolition, and Brute Force Squad. Soldiers, meanwhile, break down into five types: Gunners (standard issue grunts armed with machine guns), Chuckers (grenade hurlers); Scorchers (flamethrowers); Launchers (bazookas); and Bombers (bomb throwers).

Each type of soldier is represented by an icon at the top of the screen, and gamers can cycle through the various soldiers by clicking on the icons. When a soldier is taken down, the player can call for a Medic, who will either provide first aid on the spot (not recommended) or move the wounded soldier to safety.

The action is displayed from an angled overhead perspective, providing the game with a sense of depth and texture.

A detailed Battle Report follows each conflict with vital information and stats.

Battle it out in a furled frenzy. Leading your troops to victory is not so easy!

The characters are rather large—big as evergreens in some sequences—but they fit nicely within the non-scrolling confines of the preliminary battle areas. Each of the specialists has his own unique look and artist Brian Colin stuffed plenty of personality into these characters. There are loads of other realistic touches—including the option to plunder a defeated enemy.

At the end of each battle, a report lists the remaining medical personnel and the point totals.

The development team under producer Jim Simmons included the design by Brian Colin and Jeff Nauman, programming by Jeff Nauman, graphics by Brian Colin, and audio effects/music by Mike Bartlow.

The four-way control adapter is the first hardware peripheral ever released by Electronic Arts, and the company has high hopes for the device, especially on sports games, all of which will be designed to take advantage of the four-player capability. Tengen has a similar device, but there's no word yet on whether or not they are compatible.

The first sports game to use the four-player peripheral will be **Bill Walsh College Football**. For now, however, **General Chaos** looks like it will offer players a wildly unusual gaming experience that tests wits as well as reflexes, and we anxiously await the final version.

— Bill Kunkel

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Final Fight 2

PUBLISHER	Capcom
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Fighting
MEGABITS	10 MEG
PLAYERS	2
LEVELS	6

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	86%

OVERALL 86%

Final Fight 2: Could this be the final Final Fight?

Final Fight was one of the first games released for the SNES. The arcade smash was a logical choice because it brought with it name recognition and started the tradition of Capcom's great fighting games.

Now there is **Final Fight 2**, also for the SNES. The story picks up where the first game left off, and makes up for the inadequacies of the early SNES **Final Fight**.

Players have three characters to choose from this time, two of them new to the series. Along with veteran **FF** character Hagar, the Mayor of Metro City, there is also Maki, a fierce fighting lady out to rescue her father and sister from the treacherous Mad Gear Gang. Rounding out the group is Carlos, an excellent fighter with a debt to pay back to Hagar and Guy.

The scene this time is removed from Metro city, and takes the player on a tour of Hong Kong and Europe. Each level takes place in a different country, and rest assured, the Mad Gear Gang has plenty of members around the world to keep even the most avid fighting fan busy for a while.

The background scenery looks good, with more animation than the first game. The characters are large and move fluidly with a ton of different moves to pummel the enemy. Fixed now is the flicker that was a problem in the first game. Even when there are a lot of enemies on the screen at once, the characters don't slow down or breakup.

A couple of new bonus screens have been added that allow players to get extra points and lives. Among them is the chance to beat apart another car, and a stage where you must destroy the oil drums and avoid getting torched.

The sounds are very similar to the first game, with digitized yelps when the characters are fighting and screams when the enemies die. This thrown in among the numerous thuds, representing punches and kicks. The music is uninspired but does not take anything away from the game.

Some people may complain that there is not as much technique to playing this game as there is in Capcom's monster hit, **Street Fighter 2**. The player does not need to memorize all kinds of button

Use the powerful headbutt to put your many opponents out of commission.

combinations in order to get the characters to fight with their different moves. The fight button is just that, one button. The computer decides which moves to execute according to your location and the location of the enemy. The player can also jump, jump attack, and even jump

Ouch! A pile-driver will cause the enemy to think twice when trying to attack.

backwards. And if the jump and attack buttons are pressed at the same time, the character will use his/her special power. Be warned, however, that using the special attack takes life off your character's energy bar.

Don't misunderstand, there is still a lot of game here, and a lot that can be done with just the two active buttons. It just makes it a whole lot easier to get the hang of the game this way.

Final Fight 2 offers a nice change from the one-on-one arena fighting games that are becoming so popular right now. While **Street Fighter 2** is an incredible game (2 million SNES owners wouldn't lie) it is nice to play a game that moves along rather than just stands still. The characters old and new are great and the addition of the two-player mode fixes the problems that the original game suffered from. It is still a little short, but overall it's an outstanding effort for an original (not arcade translation) fighting game.

— Marc Camron

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Kirby's Adventure

PUBLISHER	Nintendo
SYSTEM	NES
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	6 MEG
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	7

• •

COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	81%
PLAYABILITY	94%

OVERALL 93%

"I'll huff and puff and blow your house down!"—B.B.Wolf

If this game looks and sounds familiar, that's because it is really a follow-up to last year's GameBoy hit.

Kirby's Adventure also goes to show how it is still possible to make outstanding games for the 8-Bit Nintendo. This game holds the system up and shows that it may have a few more good years in it yet.
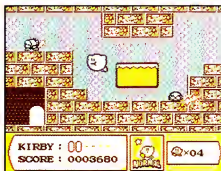
Kirby, after taking a huge breath, has the ability to fly around for a short time.

The game itself is not all that unique. It falls in the category of multi-scrolling, Mario type action/adventure. Once you plug the cartridge in, however, it becomes obvious how much time and thought went into the creation of this game. **Kirby's Adventure** is not just another Mario knock-off.

The game takes place in Dream Land, a swell place to be where life is spent eating, sleeping, and basically just having a jolly-old time. Then, one day, the inhabitants of Dream Land woke up and realized that they did not have any more dreams. It seems that someone had stolen the Star Rod from the Dream Spring, and caused it to dry up.

Our hero, Kirby, finds out that the evil King Dedede (no I'm not stuttering) not only stole the Star Rod, but also broke it up into seven pieces. The pieces were given to the King's friends and scattered around Dream Land.

So it is up to Kirby, the nod-descript blob of a hero, to venture forth and collect the pieces of the rod. Only then can the sweet dreams of Dream Land be restored.

Graphically, **Kirby** is beautiful. The different settings around Dream Land are named for food, with names like Ice Cream Land and Yogurt Yard. The settings don't necessarily take after the foods that they are named for, but each varies as much as the names.

Every level is broken down into sub-levels. As each sub-level is completed, the next one opens up. Often times, some kind of bonus room will open up also, giving players the chance to power-up and earn extra lives.

The characters are well animated, and the bosses are interesting and add to the action of the game. The different expressions that Kirby gets when performing tasks are priceless. He is so cute you will find yourself reaching for an insulin shot.

The sound is nothing to get too excited about. It is generally unobtrusive, and does not get too annoying after playing for a long period. The sound effects are done very well, and do help enhance the game play.

Then comes the question of playability. This game is full of technique and is just down-right fun to play. The character Kirby can walk, run, jump, fly, and swim. His power to fly is part of his main offensive weapon — suction.

To fly, Kirby takes a mouthful of air and starts to float. By pressing the B button, he lets the air out and drops.

The air blast itself can be used to attack an enemy, as can Kirby's sudden, unexpected fall from the sky.

Kirby can also suck smaller enemies up and spit them out in the form of stars. The stars can be used to attack other bad guys.

And, some of the smaller enemies can be sucked up and swallowed, giving Kirby their power. There are over 20 enemies that Kirby can do this with, gaining abilities like laser-beams and porcupine quills.

Using his forced-air pressure, Kirby is now able to destroy his many foes.

The game even includes a battery backup to save up to three games. The new Nintendo battery doesn't even require that you hold in the reset button before removing the cart, which is a nice improvement.

Most of all, it is nice to see that Nintendo hasn't forgotten about all of the loyal fans and customers that have purchased their 8-Bit system over the years. **Kirby's Adventure** is more than just another rehash put out to appease those who may be concerned about the lack of 8-Bit titles. It is a significant addition to the 8-Bit Nintendo library.

— Marc Camron
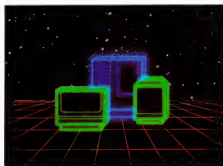
VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?

PUBLISHER	Hi-Tech/EA
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Edutainment
MEGABITS	4 MEG
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	89%
PLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 90%

It's time to go after Carmen again...all too literally!

Carmen Sandiego and her notorious band of V.I.L.E. henchmen have arrived on the SNES for a fifteenth-century chase filled with historic places, people and events. Carmen and her crew are once again up to their nefarious hijinks and only the player, cast as the newest employee of the ACME Detective Agency, can find and apprehend the villains.

The game begins in the ACME Detective Agency lobby, where the gamer takes an elevator to the personnel department and signs in, then boards the assigned Chronoskinner, which runs through its on-board diagnostics, then connects the player up with the chief. He reveals when, where, and which treasure was stolen, the gender of the thief, and the time allowance the Federal Time Travel Commission has authorized for use of

the incredible Chronoskinner.

The culprit is fleeing for one of 48 possible hide-outs in time. To win the game and gain points for advancement, the player must complete two tasks before time runs out. First, the criminal must be tracked to his or her final destination, using the clues available at each earlier location. Second, the criminal must be identified so an arrest warrant can be issued to him or her.

The Chronoskinner is one of the player's most valuable resources. The control panel allows the player to travel, search for clues, obtain or enter data, and abort the game. The travel button can be used to check on possible destinations, while the search button permits the gamer to interview witnesses or informants and scan the crime scene for clues to the wrongdoer's next destination. Both the witness and informant buttons contain character clues, and the
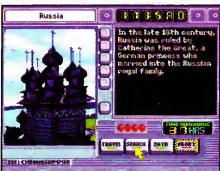
The Chronoskipper is an indispensable tool when fighting crime across time.

scanner will provide physical clues. The Chronoskinner contains dossiers, complete with mug shots, for Carmen and her henchmen. At least three clues must be logged before a warrant can be issued. Once the player is at the final scene, the witness and informant buttons will not yield any clues, but will instead reveal that the criminal is near. The Capture robot will activate itself and the gamer is treated to the animated graphic of Carmen, in her standard red

trench coat, being chased, captured, and beamed up.

The complexity of **Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?** is average. The player will not only need to reference the Chronoskinner resources, but also *The New American Desk Encyclopedia* which is packaged with the game cart. Locating information to solve the game is easier if one becomes familiar with the Encyclopedia before signing in.

The graphics are solid, but not spectacular. The date bar of the Chronoskinner is difficult to read, which makes placing the event difficult. The ACME Detective Agency provides a nifty opening background with a first-person view of the facility as the player enters the elevator, turns, and sees the lobby through the closing elevator doors.

The opening musical sequence is a dark, throbbing melody which dissolves into ambient sound effects. Thereafter, the music serves primarily as an audio cue, sounding a warning note when a V.I.L.E. henchman appears. The overall silence of the game is an interesting change of pace.

The playability is another issue. While playing without the guidebook is possible, it is frustrating. However, it is equally frustrating to have to constantly consult the documentation. There also isn't much game play, with nothing to jump over, no weapons, or any other classic video game elements. Instead, the control pad is used as a mouse.

Nonetheless, the integrity of the Carmen game is retained and if the gamer enjoyed the computer versions, then the SNES version should be added to their gaming shelves. And, hey, let's be careful out there. Ms. Sandiego may be beautiful, but she's also quite crafty.

— Laurie Yates

DOUBLE BUBBLE TROUBLE!
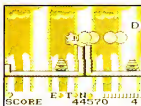
GAME BOY

Whoever says blowing bubbles isn't much fun is full of hot air! "Bubble Bobble" is back with double the trouble and twice the pop. This bubble bursting adventure is available for the Nintendo and Game Boy systems, both leaving you gasping for air.

Your two light hearted buddies, Bub and Bob, will be waiting for you to bop around and belch some bubbles amid some high flying action. You'll need to lighten your load and even hold your breath because this air raising adventure will be no breeze. Time to blow!
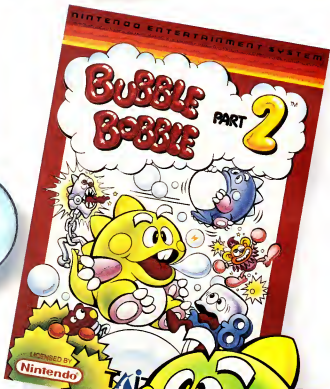
TAITO

TAITO AMERICA CORPORATION
390 Holbrook Drive
Wheeling, IL 60090
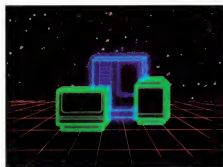
VIDEO GAME GALLERY

WRITTEN BY CODEMASTERS

MicroMachines

PUBLISHER	CodeMasters
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Racing
MEGABITS	8 MEG
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	N/A

• •

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	91%

OVERALL 82%

There are plenty of thrills, but what about the frills?

Don't just collect those super-detailed MicroMachines models, race 'em! Cars, trucks, tanks, helicopters, and boats race over some of the oddest tracks ever splashed across a television screen.

The desktop race course has some rather humorous messages for players.

Race results are posted following each event. Will you be in first place?

There are two solitaire modes; head-to-head and challenge. The former pits your MicroMachine against one foe, while the challenge provides three rivals. The two-player option offers both single races and tournaments with all kinds of vehicles.

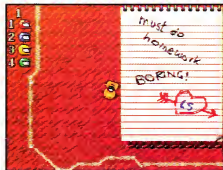All drivers come from a pool of 12, available on a special selection screen. A one-word rating above each one's animated drawing suggests that individual's degree of talent. Spider, the default choice in the solitaire versions, is identified as an Ace. Testing him against drivers judged fair or poor may be just the edge first-time players need.

Not that it'll take long to grasp the rudiments. One button makes the vehicle go forward, another backs it up. Pushing the left edge of the direction control causes the car to turn counter-clockwise. The right edge of the same control triggers clockwise rotation.

Lack of an alternative command scheme is a glaring omission. A setup based on screen directions might make the game better for those who aren't comfortable with the subjective viewpoint.

MicroMachines is fast and exciting, but not very serious. The courses include desktops and kitchen tables.

The top-down scrolling playfields greatly enhance the illusion that the vehicles

are toys. The tracks are shown in such tight close-ups that only a small portion of the course is actually on the screen at a time. The scenery, composed of oversized drawings of easily recognizable items like pencils and books, maintains the proper visual relationship. Every MicroMachine that skitters off the edge of a table onto the floor below is a reminder that we're racing miniatures.

The background graphics are very clever, and they are mostly well-drawn, too. The vehicles aren't nearly as attractive, because they aren't as complex as objects in most other 16-Bit games.

The objects may be a little plain, but they sure whip around the screen at satisfyingly high speeds. It takes a light touch to keep the vehicle on the track.

The music is weak. The tunes are pleasant, but the orchestration is much too sparse. It sounds like a Commodore 64 score.

British game houses traditionally stress play-action, while developers in this country try to create a total experience for players. **MicroMachines** can't

be faulted for its game play, but it comes up short in flexibility, ambience, options, and other so-called frills.

This is the first title that CodeMasters, previously strictly a developer for the U.S., plans to publish under its own name here. CodeMasters should give more weight to other aspects of its products if it hopes to become as respected and successful on this side of the Atlantic as in the United Kingdom.

Despite rough edges, **MicroMachines** is high-spirited fun.

— Arnie Katz

Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing

PUBLISHER	Gametek
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Auto Racing
MEGABITS	8 MEG
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	86%
PLAYABILITY	94%

OVERALL 91%

Experience racing thrills in this superb simulation.

Do names like Nigel Mansell really convince gamers to purchase this racing game over that one? Does Jackie Stewart's name on the box mean more than Al Unser's? Does A.J. Foyt carry more juice than Speed Racer?

Pick courses from many countries in the quest for the F-1 racing championship.

When you consider that some of the most successful auto simulations in software history have had generic names like **Test Drive**, **Indianapolis 500**, **Monaco Grand Prix**, **Enduro**, and **Pole Position**, one has to wonder. Clearly, Mansell has had a storied career in racing circles, from go-carts to the Grand Prix, but it really doesn't mean too much in terms of

this particular video game.

Fortunately, star power isn't really needed. **Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing** is one hot simulation, with superb graphics, great game play, and a stimulating series of realistic racing options. Players can participate in a single race or compete on one of 16 circuits. Once a circuit has been chosen, a screen appears with an illustration of the track and some relevant information, along with the access point to the race options screen.

This options screen allows racers to set up their vehicle, take a run in a qualifying lap, or head right to the race. Setting up a vehicle allows the car to be specially configured to meet the demands of a specific race. For example, settings are available for tires (hard, soft, or wet), wings (for Airfoils, with optional settings of 10%, 20%, or 30%), and gears (manual or automatic).

The Qualifying lap permits the player to compete for position. If a player opts not to qualify, they can automatically begin the race from the back of the pack. Players compete against 11 other cars, four of which are good cars with top drivers, four of which are average, and three which are downright poor. Each race varies between four and six laps.

The game also offers those costly pit stops, a race screen display which features the entire track, lap time, the number of seconds the player's car is behind the leader, a map of the current circuit, gear number, digital speed display, tire

wear, and position.

The graphics use a first-person perspective with the hands of the player-surrogate visible on the steering wheel. This low-rider POV is superb, blending beautifully with the detailed, richly textured graphics that comprise the track surroundings.

As for old Nigel, in 1992 he won the F-1 Circuit then made headlines by switching to the Indy circuit later that year where he won his first race. **Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing**, however, is based on his 1992 F-1 season exploits. So whether you've heard of him or not, he's a big name in the racing world. The problem is that a large percentage of the people who play video and computer racing car games haven't the slightest idea or interest in the actual world of high speed racing; their interest is in ripping around the track in a VR-like environment, experiencing the speed and thrills for themselves, rather than through the glory of some athletic daredevil.

But whether you know who Nigel is or whether the name draws a complete blank, **Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing** is a first-rate racing video game, with lots of detail, great graphics, and compelling play mechanics.

This is highly recommended for high-speed auto enthusiasts and, of course, for fans of Nigel.

Versions are also scheduled for the NES and Game Boy.

— Bill Kunkel
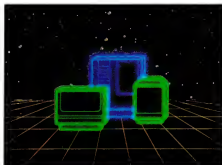
VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Rock & Roll Racing

PUBLISHER	Interplay
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Racing
MEGABITS	8 MEG
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	98%
PLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 96%

A blast from the past comes 'round heavy at last.

[Editors Note: A beta version of Rock & Roll Racing was inadvertently reviewed as a finished game in EG's June '93 issue. The following is a look at the finished product.]

From the moment the Interplay logo appears on the screen, accompanied by that familiar, nasty guitar intro from "Bad to the Bone" blaring from the TV stereo speakers, this game has you by the intestines, and, dude, it *doesn't* let go!

It's inspired by the early NES cult classic RC Pro-Am in which gamers used their controllers to guide radio-controlled cars, displayed from an angled side perspective, as they snaked around a banked, scrolling track full of hairpin turns and speed bumps. The game's great innovation, however, was the placement of special bonus items and

weapons randomly around the track. Once a car picked up a package of missiles, for example, it could open fire on the competition.

Rock & Roll Racing takes that early gem and gives it a top-of-the-line, heavy metal work-over. The cars are larger, the weapons are nastier, and the post-punk motif gives the whole game a decidedly cool look.

Set in the future, where race tracks have been established on several planets, gamers guide a variety of mean machines over several worlds worth of visually compelling terrains.

The player has his choice of which car he wishes to use when competing.

The game begins with the player(s) selecting the game mode, then choosing from among three vehicles: a sportster, four-wheel drive Jeep, or a combination car called a Dirt Devil. The sportscar is obviously faster, but traction on some of these tracks can be hell on wheels. It's also possible to view equipment, change planets, set basic options, and, if one has the money, purchase a new car.

Rock & Roll Racing even has a role-playing component, with gamers given

The action and sound is fast and furious as the cars jockey for a good position.

their choice of computer surrogates. These racers hail from a variety of planets, giving them advantages and disadvantages on a situational basis.

In two-player mode, the game reverts to a split screen, and while this invariably results in a somewhat compressed presentation, **Rock & Roll Racing** handles the problem without undue flattening of visuals.

Players start out with a certain amount of money, and more can be earned by winning races or picking up packages of cash among the on-the-track bonus items. Cash allows the racers to upgrade their vehicles, adding armor, weapons, and other formidable options.

Playability and hot graphics are among this game's major strengths. It doesn't really have any weaknesses, unless some players find the graphics a trifle dark. But the touchstone that transforms a good game into a cosmic experience is **Rock & Roll Racing**'s audio. Larry "Supermouth" Huffman's play-by-play is electrifying, and beautifully programmed. One never has the sense that a phrase has been plucked from a speech bank and deposited into the voice track; it all sounds perfectly seamless, in fact. And then, of course, there's the music. While it's a blast to roar around a science-fictional racetrack firing super-weapons at the other drivers, doing it to the accompaniment of Led Zep, Steppenwolf, George Thorogood, Black Sabbath, and Deep Purple is a whole other proposition.

At one point during the testing of this game, this reviewer's vehicle was blasting down the home stretch with one car to pass. Instead of speeding past him, however, we flipped a button, launched a missile and blew our competitor off the cartridge, just as "(I'm a) Highway Star" began to play on the soundtrack. And if that's not totally cosmic, what is?
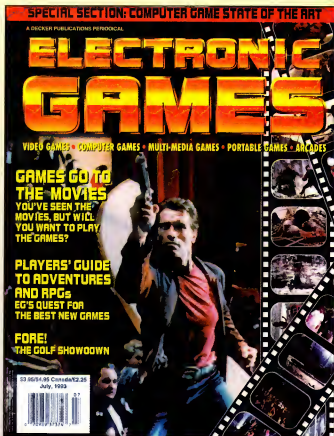
— Bill Kunkel

SOFTWARE GALLERY

Protostar: War on the Frontier

PUBLISHER	Tsunami MediaVas
DESIGNER	Nokhoudian
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG
MEMORY	7 MEG
PLAYERS	1

COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	93%

OVERALL 91%

Undercover trade diplomacy through galactic cultures.

In the time-honored tradition of all Amphibioid Aliens From Space, the Skeetch Empire views Human prosperity as an invitation for conquest. The Human Alliance, with its funds near depletion,

Conversing with the regulars at bars will uncover a wealth of information.

constituency faith dwindling and facing almost certain defeat, activates the Protostar Directive—an agenda for unlimited covert tactics.

Protostar: War On The Frontier enlists the player as the sole Protostar agent chosen to save humankind. To conceal his activities the player assumes the identity of a merchant commander for Newfront, a small corporation which has managed to escape the attention of the Skeetch. Newfront operates three outposts on the frontier which offer such essential services as Exchange and Biotech Centers, Frontier Craft engineering facilities, Com-Terminals and, of course, The Lounge.

As the game opens, the player has just battled his way to the Garriod outpost and made contact with Human Defense Coalition Director Estevan Hawking at the Com-Terminal. The Director instructs his new agent to seek relations with and ally the four alien factions in the Thule sector—the insectoid Ghebraant, predatory Kaynik, peaceful Deresta and the austere Vantu—keeping in mind that he's trying to *ally* these species. "Minimum offensive posture" stresses Hawking, meaning "try not to kill them."

Oh yes, and send money. The HDC is perpetually in economic crisis. Operating costs are 1000 credits per day and if the player neglects to transmit funds regularly things in the home sector begin to go visibly bad. The Com-Terminal is also the place to keep current with other happenings in the sector from new worlds discovered to bizarre recipes. A quick stop in the lounge introduces Dodel, a recurring character who can answer some questions and steer the player toward a profitable first encounter.

The player is supplied with a Starship for regional and hyperpath travel and an Explorer vehicle for planetside activity. Both vessels are fueled by Stabilium and the fuel levels must be monitored or the player could find himself stranded—there's no motor club out here.

The player must continuously gather the precious elements used for fuel.

Already on board is Automated Being Evolution 440 (ABE) that serves as the ship's robotic engineer. The ship's other stations (navigation, tactical, biotech, science and contact) are unmanned but accessible to the player until crew members are hired and assigned. The crew members are salaried so if the player doesn't have enough money to pay them, they'll get petulant and may refuse to perform their duties.

The game's weakest element is the direct maneuvering system. It's exactly the same as the one in Interplay's **Star Trek 25th Anniversary**, and involves moving a cursor around a Control Pad. It's quite awkward at first and the field of view is very narrow. The same system is employed in the Explorer, but to much better effect since that vehicle simply skims the surface gathering life-forms and materials and visiting Trade Centers.

Trade is essential and the various attitude-heavy species must be handled with the utmost diplomacy. Avoid the temptation to blow away some of the snottier individuals and remember that you'll catch more flies with honey than with an accelerator cannon.

Protostar is a well-designed game that combines intense combat with pastoral planetary pursuits and has a sly sense of humor, with references to such 20th century pop culture icons as *Star Trek*, *MacGyver*, and Rodney King

— *Scott Wolf*

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S
CHESS MANIAC 5 BILLION and 1

National Lampoon's Chess Maniac 5 Billion and 1

PUBLISHER	Spectrum Holobyte
DESIGNERS	Mogg, Jap
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Strategy
MEMORY	26 MEG
PLAYERS	1-2

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	79%

OVERALL 88%

It's time for a chess game that won't bore you to tears.

This game's not for everyone. While it plays a solid game of chess at almost any level one could desire (the first level, called Beginner's Luck, is no challenge whatsoever), this *is* under the imprimatur of the *National Lampoon*. Which is to say, if bawdy, rather juvenile humor is not your bag, by all means select another chess title, without all the rather specialized bells and whistles, off the shelf.

Second, there must be a sound card installed or only the sound of the internal fan will accompany the game. And that would be a shame, because the Chess Maniac's HAL-like voice, which provides both play-by-play and running commentary, is worth a large part of the price of

Your chessmen will plead their case when forced into a really stupid move.

admission. (If only it could be advised that the human opponent's name isn't necessarily Dan.)

There is a Monty Python-ish sort of opening, in which a credit crawl disguises most of the names to look Russian (e.g., Game by Paul Magginski and Erick Japovitch; others include Pat Feelyov, Carrie Galbraithskaya!). Some may not be so masked (Ed Subitsky?) but only insiders will know.

There are two optional 3-D boards and sets. One, called the Bawdy set, has a variety of animated characters for the pieces, the sides characterized as Persian and Medieval instead of black and white (respectively). The board may be rotated to four views, so that the scene can be from behind white facing the Persian pieces, behind black facing the Medieval characters, or from either side. The animations are based on digitized actors, which creates lifelike movement. The Persian pawns are shimmering belly dancers, while their Medieval counterparts are shambling bell-capped fools. The medieval rooks are scythe-carrying Grim Reapers that slide across the squares to a chorus of shivering "ooh"s, and the Persian knights strut to a distinctly inner city beat.

As with Interplay's **Battle Chess**, a duel takes place on captures, different for each pair. The option is to to zoom in on the action for each duel. Most are amusing, but perhaps because of the restraints of live-action, fail to stand up to repetition as well as **Battle Chess**'s imaginative fighting encounters.

There are other animations. The Chess Maniac does his level best to distract the player, and will even try to sneak a piece off the board. He's pretty obvious about it, fortunately. A hand grabs a pawn and starts to waft away while suspiciously innocent music plays in the background (a tap on the keyboard brings a ruler to the back of the hand rather smartly, however). A shark fin may cross the board and, if nothing is done, the shark drags a piece under. A lovely lady appears in the normally empty seat across the table and shakes her shoulders enticingly (there seems to be little expectation that women may want to play this version of the world's oldest board game). There are others.

It should be noted that since the designers chose to use only the VGA 256-color mode for the game's presentation, the 320 x 200 pixel resolution is a tad rough on the character images. Hey, it's better than CGA! However, one unfortunate result of the low resolution is that from any angle it is a little difficult to differentiate and locate the chessmen on the board, especially in the center files where one piece may be almost hidden by another. The board is tiltable, using a function key, which can help a little.

This also carries over to the other 3-D set, called the Boring set. It has the standard Staunton pieces, in silver and gold. There are no animations, cheating efforts or distractions, save for the occasional heartfelt yawn provided by one of the pawns. The color commentary does continue, however, unless deselected.

There is a 2-D board; it's nice, woodgrain, symbols for the pieces, overhead view, *really* boring—but you can see where the pieces are, and a small version of it can be brought in to overlay one of the 3-D screens to see the layout.

The audible play-by-play can use the now-standard coordinate notation (E2 to E4, C8 takes G4), the algebraic system (E4, Bishop takes G4) or the classic descriptive system (Pawn to King Four, Bishop takes Queen). This may be the only computer chess game that supports the latter.

The manual maintains the *National Lampoon* parody approach. Titled *CG Quarterly*, its various sections are treated as articles in which real information is interspersed with the spurious.

Chess Maniac is lots of fun and playable, but it should not be the first choice for someone who prefers to keep his or her mind on the game.

Taste? You want it from these surly characters? F'geddabout it!

—Ross Chamberlain

SOFTWARE GALLERY

Freddy Pharkas: Frontier Pharmacist

PUBLISHER	Sierra On-Line
DESIGNER	Lowe, Mandel
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Adventure
MEMORY	14 MEG
PLAYERS	1

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 90%

If you ever wondered what it means to be hornswoggled...

Yee-ha, cowboys and cowgirls! **Leisure Suit Larry** designer Al Lowe is back with a new partner and a new character in **Freddy Pharkas: Frontier Pharmacist** (**FPFP**). It has been over a year since Al Lowe designed an adventure and **FPFP** reflects both the rejuvenation the rest gave him and the influx of ideas from the new blood, Josh Mandel. These two jokesters took all the sacred cliches and turned them upside down. Everything you might expect in a Western, from gunfights and stampedes to a saloon and brothel are in **FPFP**, but they haven't been this funny since *Blazing Saddles* burned the silver screen.

Westerns are few and far between in the world of computer games. Lowe and Mandel took the bait and produced a challenging, hilarious, rootin'-tootin'

romp through the cowboy era. Watch the introductory *Ballad of Freddy Pharkas* to find out how Freddy became a druggist in 19th century Coarsegold, California. He had great promise as a gunfighter in his youth until a battle with a little terror named Kenny, who blew off his ear. Earless and defeated, Freddy hung up his guns and went off to pharmacy school.

In **FPFP**, someone has closed down most of the town and plans to do much more. Freddy must discover who's behind the plot, save the day, and maybe even get a girlfriend in the process.

FPFP uses the standard Sierra interface, but the designers and artists have Westernized the look and feel of the point-and-click environment, with added touches of humor. For example, sliders to adjust volume, detail, speed and text speed are hanged criminals that must be raised or lowered on their nooses.

A new feature in the **FPFP** interface is quite useful. A little dot on inventory objects and other icons marks the active part of the icon. Players won't have to guess where to click the icons in this game. Also, Freddy's pharmacological laboratory is quite flexible and has enough ingredients to make a wide variety of pills, medicines and other mixtures. A special interface screen represents the lab. It has the right tools and vessels to fill the prescription requests of Coarsegold's residents and solve other game puzzles.

Lowe and Mandel really hit paydirt with **FPFP** in the fun department. Although tough in some parts, the majority of the game is enjoyable, quite playable and downright silly. Sheep abound in **FPFP**, from the main road to the dance hall, although their purpose in the game is little more than a recurring sight gag. Various credits pop up randomly on the screen and the second of the four acts in the story focuses on a rather embarrassing habit of the town's horses that Freddy must correct. Many parts of the game will make players laugh out loud, but

Freddy's hard work at the pharmacy will pay off in new friendships and loves.

Knowing how to mix those dangerous ingredients is a valuable Western skill.

there is a strong story behind the humor and many challenging puzzles to solve.

Although **FPFP** is a spoof of Westerns, there is some order among the mayhem and unforgettable characters that will, it is to be hoped, return in a sequel. The package itself includes a replicated medical guide from 1881 full of information both useful and worthless, all of it funny and some of it invaluable to the solution of the game's puzzles.

FPFP's graphics and sounds distinguish the game because of the Western motif. Coarsegold is as close to a ghost town as anyone can get without actually dying. Its locations and characters take on a life of their own in the full-color graphics. Effects like the fade from a sepia-toned screen at the beginning of each act and other animations make the game as nice to look at as it is to play. There is a wide variety of music to accompany the action in the game—over 10 distinct pieces. The sound effects are in many cases recorded sounds from the real world that players will immediately recognize. Every time the score increases, a voice congratulates with a supportive "Score!" for the player. Sound effects can also play a significant part of the story, as Lowe and Mandel realized when they put together the second act.

FPFP may start a whole new trend in computer games to "go West," but it will always be the first to take a not-so-serious look at the lawmen, saloons and gunfighters that made Westerns so popular. There are a lot of things players can try that have no impact whatsoever on the plot of the game. This allowance for experimentation is a nice touch and can even guide players to uncover even more humor. **FPFP** has all the elements necessary for a huge hit. Its focus on gags is a nice break from the other adventures out there on store shelves that sometimes get a little too serious. Freddy Pharkas better return after he rides off into the glowing sunset!

— Russ Ceccola

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Eye of the Beholder III:
Assault on Myth Drannor

PUBLISHER	SSI
DESIGNER	John Miles
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG
MEMORY	10 MEG
PLAYERS	1
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 85%

Good adventuring is in the eye of the beholder...again.

The Eye of the Beholder series spans a time in which major changes took place in both hardware and software in the game industry. When it started, the Amiga and C64/128 market were very much alive and the IBM-and-compatibles were just starting to develop as spectacular game systems. Now, companies do tremendously innovative things with PCs and games eclipse those early attempts. **Eye of the Beholder III: Assault on Myth Drannor**, the finale to the Beholder series, keeps with the times with its enhanced full-color graphics and sound support and also improves the game system so that it is more intuitive and mouse-operated.

Eye III takes place in the Forgotten Realms world of the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D) universe. Myth Dran-

nor is a ruined city in the Realms controlled by a lich named Acwellan. You must guide a four-person party through the outdoor and indoor locations in Myth Drannor to discover the city's secrets and eventually defeat Acwellan. The journey is a long one, but there are enough things to discover in the locations and variety to keep players entertained, as well as busy.

Eye III adheres to the AD&D 2nd Edition rules and incorporates all the elements of AD&D that players have come to love. The manual describes the basics of AD&D (classes, races, monsters, spells, etc.) and also suggests some effective party combinations for different types of players which they should accept as good advice.

SSI streamlined the interface for **Eye III** and added an extremely useful "All Attack" function (space bar) during combat to make battles, especially with weak monsters, less tedious to control. The game still puts too much emphasis on food, but that's part of the AD&D world. Some new monster allies populate Myth Drannor (like sprites and were-tigers), as well as four brand-new monsters: Grave Mist, Living Muck, Ogre Slug and Shadow Hound. Players with parties

Your hardy band of adventurers will have to rely on the advice of others.

from **Eye of the Beholder II** can import their characters intact into **Eye III** and will find the game more enjoyable with both a familiar party and game system.

The Beholder series is very popular with fantasy role-playing game (FRPG) fans, largely because of its first-person

view and puzzling environment. More like **Wizardry** than **Ultima Underworld** in some ways, **Eye III** has lots of depth, varied locations and situations in which the party approach to an adventure works best. **Eye III** will frustrate players with its teleports, confusing passageways and tough monsters, but the game is entertaining despite the challenge. Stuck gamers should pick up the clue book. It will be easier to keep the party's location straight and the game will lose none of its flavor.

Eye III is a major upgrade from its predecessor in the sound and graphics department. You can see all of the doors, buttons, etc., from all views and monsters approach from a distance rather than pop up. The monster graphics are quite good and the 3-D effects are even more detailed and colorful. Attractive cinematic scenes appear from time to time to tell the story. **Eye III** also features a number of musical scores that change to reflect the situation in the game. The sound effects are more impressive. Sounds from footsteps to monster growls pepper the adventure and make the experience feel more like the real thing.

There are many hours of play in store for gamers, and they lead up to an exciting finale. The Attack All feature makes combat less of a punishment than it was before, which is a welcome upgrade in many situations.

Eye III is quite a tough game, especially for first-time players, but it takes a while to get to the tough parts so that new players have a chance to get started. Myth Drannor offers much variety to players who want a good FRPG amidst its many combat rounds and secret locations. The mixture of bells and whistles and a real AD&D adventure works well to complete the Beholder trilogy.

— Russ Ceccola

SOFTWARE GALLERY

Daughter of Serpents

PUBLISHER	Millennium
DESIGNER	Elliot, Edwards
PLATFORM	MS/DOS
THEME	Adventure
MEMORY	20 MEG
PLAYERS	1

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	55%

OVERALL 71%

In which it is discovered that once bitten...

The first impression gleaned of **Daughter of Serpents** is that it must be a massive game. After all, there are six compressed disks to install to the hard drive. There'll be happy adventuring for weeks

Travel to Egypt to find out about the ancient document of great power.

to come...right? Wrong.

Closer inspection reveals that the vast majority of files are graphic memory hogs which add to the ambiance but do not, in and of themselves, a good game make. Okay, so what! Let us put on our archeological hats and dig a little deeper into this mystery.

The setting for **Daughter of Serpents (DoS)** is promising enough; the city of Alexandria, ancient home to Pharaohs, asps and countless Gods of animal likenesses. One almost expects Boris Karloff to shamble around a corner at any moment, resplendent in the fez he wore for *The Mummy's Curse*. Further, the events that unfold as the player-character steps off the boat also portend good things to come. Specifically, a gentleman is stabbed by some sort of fanatic, who is in turn shot. As the perpetrator dies, he mutates into something reptilian. Things are apparently not as they seem, eh? Unfortunately, from this point forward things start to go downhill.

Players must deal with many different characters to uncover various secrets.

Despite the fact that players are lured along with promises in the manual that this is a true graphic novel, and that their actions or inactions have a decided impact on the course of the story, it simply isn't true. Regardless of which character is chosen, or if the player opts to generate one of their own, the major events of the story are no different. The only differences between playing with an archeologist, for example, in lieu of a private detective, would be that certain puzzles would be easier for one to solve

than the other. Replaying the game with a different character doesn't mean the puzzle is different, only that the character may not be able to solve it in time even if the player already *knows* the answer. Further, the plot as a whole is definitely linear despite the hype, therefore the replay value is nonexistent.

Even so, if **DoS** was as massive as it first appears, replay value wouldn't be an issue. This isn't the case either, as experienced players could finish this one in three days or less. Novice players might eke it out to a week or more but that is definitely below average given the current asking price of adventure games.

The operating system behind the game is Eldritch's SIGNOS, which stands for Scripted Interactive Graphic Novel Operating System. This is a fancy name for a point-and-click interface where the mouse pointer changes based on what actions the player is trying to do. Conversations are handled via decision trees and depicted in speech bubbles. Automapping is provided in similar fashion to the **Ultima Underworld** system, but it really isn't necessary since there are a very limited number of locations in the game to visit.

Not everything associated with **DoS** is negative. One of the player resources, Thomas Cook's guide, is a nice informative addition to the game. Also, as mentioned previously, the game does have some impressive sound and graphic routines. This is not surprising since the Eldritch team cut their teeth on the Amiga. Unfortunately, however, they have not expanded on these basic strengths with a system that will bring players back time and again, an essential characteristic of any successful adventure that requires players to commit both money and time to their quest.

— Ed Dille

Choose your opponent from a variety of classic members of the Sierra family.

Hoyle Classic Card Games

PUBLISHER	Sierra
DESIGNER	Holmes, Schwader
PLATFORM	MS/DOS
THEME	Card Games
MEMORY	5 MEG
PLAYERS	1

COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	88%
PLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 88%

Simple or sophisticated, it's all in the cards.

Playing cards, by themselves, are nothing more than tools for the imagination. Originating in Europe centuries ago, these implements have been used to create countless games, many of which linger or even thrive in their present day form. Sierra has programmed a package of eight of the most popular card games in their latest collection, **Hoyle Classic Card Games.** Ranging from simple games enjoyed by children, such as Crazy Eights and Old Maid, to more sophisticated pursuits like Bridge and Euchre, **Hoyle** has a lot to offer a broad base of players.

The opening screen allows players to select the game of choice by clicking with a mouse or using the keyboard arrows. Within each game there is also a hidden icon bar at the top of the screen which may be accessed with the esc key. Under the control menu, players may select which music they prefer

and also set the volume and sound effects. The pace of the game is selectable by altering the delay between turns and the length of time that onscreen messages are displayed. Also, owners of slower machines may adjust speed and detail levels to optimize performance. Every game also includes options and variations for score and play. Selecting the rules icon will explain in detail the nuances of the version being played and the player may also choose between nine different decks and ten playing surfaces.

After selecting and saving one's preferences, the player determines which opponents (and partners, if applicable) will be used for the current game. Eighteen distinct player personalities are included in the program, divided into two groupings. The first are recognizable characters from other releases, such as Leisure Suit Larry and Quarky. The second group includes "classic" players, 1930's style stereotypes. There is the gangster Dinky, the intrepid explorer Fairbanks, the wealthy playboy Winthorp and other similar caricatures. The computer players vary in skill for the different games and their ratings are provided on a handy chart included in the manual.

When play begins, the player is treated to digitized cut screens and talking animations as the computer players bid and score. Mechanically, the program is very fluid and the sound files are crisp and legible on a Soundblaster 16 card. There has even been a significant effort to synchronize the lip movements of the animated characters with the sound files. Although there are still some scenes reminiscent of poor dubbing, they are a lot rarer than in most computer games on the market. Sierra's programmers are moving in the right direction in this respect.

In addition to the four aforementioned games, **Hoyle** also features Gin Rummy,

The old favorite, Crazy Eights, comes to life with new sounds and game options.

Cribbage, Hearts and a solitaire game, Klondike. Most players are probably familiar with the majority of the games offered, but at least one needs some elucidation. Euchre is an interesting addition to the mix, as it is probably only known to Midwesterners, mostly those from Ohio. Rumored to have originated on a Lake Erie steamboat, Euchre is a trump game played with a 24 card deck (9 through Ace). Four players partner up and are dealt five cards each. The objective is to take 3 of 5 tricks with either the trump turned up on top of the blind hand by calling that card up to the dealer, or with a declared trump suit after all players have passed. The major variation over normal play is that the Jack in the declared suit (known as the right Bower) is the highest card, while the off suit jack (known as the left Bower) is the second highest card. Making a bid is worth one point, setting the opponent is two points, and a typical game is five points.

Hoyle Classic Card Games is a worthy refinement of Sierra's earlier effort and it keeps their shelf stock of consistent quality with the forum they offer on-line. The computer opponents are more than adequate in the games that don't require personality or bidding strategy.

— Ed Dille

Flashback: The Quest for Identity

PUBLISHER	SSI
DESIGNER	Paul Cuisset
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG/Arcade
MEMORY	8.5 MEG
PLAYERS	1

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	96%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 94%

Wend your way from world to world in this hidden war.

Flashback: The Quest For Identity has finally arrived after a long and confusing wait. Developed in France by Delphine Software and U.S. Gold, the folks who created Interplay's hugely successful **Out Of This World**, it was at first mistakenly perceived as a sequel to that game and Interplay was besieged with phone calls asking when "Flashback: Out Of This World 2" would be available. They were not amused.

The **Out Of This World** association is understandable—**Flashback** contains many of the same elements as OOTW, from the outstanding graphics and fluid animation to the stranded-on-another-world plotline. But **Flashback: The Quest For Identity** from Strategic Simulations, Inc., outshines **Out Of This World** in almost every way: It's much bigger, has

better graphics, and the game play is faster and smoother.

The story combines elements from such popular sci-fi action films as *Total Recall*, *The Running Man*, *Blade Runner* and *They Live*. **Flashback**'s hero, young scientist Conrad B. Hart, has invented an ocular device that can read molecular density in objects and people. While trying it out he discovers that aliens have infiltrated society on Earth with the intention of *(gasp)* taking over! Discovering that *they've* been discovered, the aliens wipe out Conrad's memory before dumping him on Jupiter's Titan moon colony.

From here the player must guide Conrad in his quest for both his identity and a way back to Earth. This involves negotiating a lush and deadly jungle to get to the interior of the moon, where he must get a job to earn money to pay a forger to falsify identity papers so that he can enter television's Death Tower game show, whose prize for survivors is a free trip to Earth where he's thrown into jail and must escape to teleport to the aliens' home planet, destroy their master brain, blow up their planet and get out alive. It's just that simple!

Starting out with only a neat little gun, a personal shield, his trusty leather jacket and no money, Conrad soon comes across all sorts of useful items, either by luck, skill or blinding violence. The roto-

scoped animation surpasses even **Prince of Persia**, the Rosetta Stone of the genre. The number of moves that Conrad is capable of is remarkable and everyday activities like running, climbing, leaping and pistol whipping nasty alien mutants have never looked this real in a game before. **Flashback** uses a special

graphics mode (320 x 240) that produces square pixels and does not utilize the full width of the monitor screen. This not only allows for more sharply defined objects but creates a dramatically framed picture as well. A nifty zoom option magnifies the area around Conrad whenever he's in danger and lets the player get a really good look at the character's detailed animation.
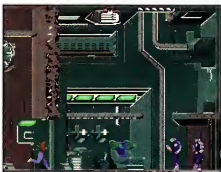
Journey through incredible worlds as you try to discover your true identity.

Flashback unfolds across seven huge levels with a password for each level. Within the levels are temporary save points so that when Conrad dies, he doesn't have to start from the beginning of the level. There are few, if any, dead ends and three skill settings (easy, normal and expert) offer a wide range of difficulty, with even the easy setting presenting a significant challenge. Conrad may be controlled with the keyboard, a Gravis joypad and most high quality joysticks. All switches on the Thrustmaster FCS (except the hat) are supported.

Flashback is a wonderful example of how good an arcade style game can be on the PC and, aside from a few situations which may prove a bit frustrating, it's almost perfect. If ever a title signaled a breakthrough in sales for a company, **Flashback** is it. Gamers will definitely appreciate this one!

— *Scott Wolf*

El-Fish

PUBLISHER	Maxis
DESIGNER	V. Pokhilko/Animatek
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Simulation
MEMORY	12 MEG
PLAYERS	1

COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	95%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	84%

OVERALL 87%

Mendelian law's the game in the electronic aquarium.

The red, green, and yellow caudal fin moves from side to side, propelling the multicolored tropical fish in a smooth, almost lazy motion. Bright colors shine from the undulating fins that ripple though the water, precisely controlling depth and direction of travel. Near the fish, one can see crabs moving in and out of shelter, waving large defensive claws to ward off intruders, such as the neoprene-clad SCUBA diver, and the whitewashed bones of a long-dead ship's pilot, still minding the helm at the bottom of our electronic aquarium.

Eons of evolution (or a creative power beyond human imagination) perfected the aesthetically beautiful and soothing swimming machine we call the fish. El-Fish took a gaggle of Russian scientists

Create your own aquarium worlds that will exist right on the computer screen.
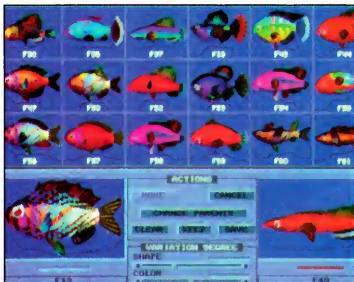
from diverse backgrounds, and a little bit of western capitalist intervention to produce.

Reminiscent of the products of the genius Walt Disney in his prime, **El-Fish** follows the combined educational and entertainment themes of Maxis since the success of SimCity. A 56-gene computer code, an analog to the genetic code of living things, is used to determine 800 parameters of shape, size, behavior, and coloration of the electronic fish. A computer genome, made up of sequences of binary digits, can be made up of any string of computer data that is long enough. For example, the genome of the Gettyfish was generated from the word processing document code produced by typing in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

These binary digit strings can be used to mate or breed the fish and produce in the offspring effects of Mendelian genetics reaching a heretofore unheard-of complexity, save that occurring in living beings themselves. Evolution can be simulated by the application of mutation or gene change effects, but, as in real life, mutations may be beautiful or even more effective, but they are most often infertile, and cannot be used in breeding.

Genes are saved on the disk in the form of a random fish generator that simulates fishing for new species in tropical waters, and breeding stock stored as fish or fish roe. (Eggs or roe take up less room on the disk than whole fish, and provide convenient storage).

Another feature of the electronic aquarium is the ability to animate any fish. Animation is achieved by rapid and evenly timed changes in 256 sequential pictures, which are divided into four sets of 64 pictures each for the front, back, and two sides of the fish.

These animations (produced on the

computer at 640 x 400 high resolution mode and striking colors) must be generated before they can be used in the aquaria, a process which can take from 6 to 7 hours on a 386SX 16 (or 7 to 10 minutes on a 486DX 33) to produce the required 256 pictures per fish. The animation process is eight times faster (on a 386DX 25 processor) when a math co-processor is added.

The animations are complemented by midi-quality music scores which can be played by most sound cards. Midi files can be converted to the XMIDI used by the program with an included conversion program. Other conversion programs allow for the use of scanned or drawn images in the aquarium environment.

In addition to catching, evolving, breeding, and animating fish, **El-Fish** provides the ability to design aquaria. Plants can be added to a variety of bottom types by generating them, selecting them from the plant library, or growing either type into the plant desired. **El-Fish** has a library of aquarium accessories, including buildings, plants, reefs, rocks, shells, tank objects, and animated objects.

Genes do not determine the outcome of a living creature; they merely define the limits that might be developed given a suitable environment. The developers of **El-Fish** had hoped to incorporate a complex pond or ocean-like environment to complement the genetic aspects of the game, but the available horsepower of computer processors was exceeded by the current version, limiting the game to the aquarium. Perhaps when we have a true 128-Bit processor, a new version of **El-Fish**, which explores the environment-versus-genome question will be introduced.

El-Fish has the ability to provide a truly electronic aquarium that does not require storage of many new and varied fish and accessories beyond the confines of a high-capacity hard drive. Some, however, may find the wait times to be intolerably long and boring. I found **El-Fish** to be every bit as mesmerizing and entertaining as a real aquarium.

— Alfred C. Giovetti
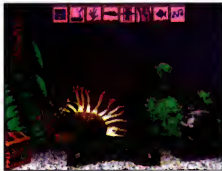
Exile: Wicked Phenomenon

PUBLISHER	T.T.I.
SYSTEM	Duo/Super CD
THEME	Action-RPG
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	95%
SOUND	93%
PLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 93%

Once again, it's time to save the townsfolk from evil.

Exile: Wicked Phenomenon continues the adventures of Sadler, who restored the Holimax in the first game and headed home to live out his remaining days without further adventures (yeah, sure). Also on board are Rumi, the female master assassin who was thought to have died after the tower collapsed in the original; Fakhyle, a great magician and advisor to Sadler; Kindi, strong of body, weak of mind; and Lawrence, a great warrior with a shadowy past.

The game features both role-playing and arcade sequences. When in a village, the player-character Sadler is seen from an angled topdown perspective and engages in conversation with the villagers. The information he acquires during these sequences is valuable. The rest of the game consists of side-scrolling action in which Sadler and his party face down a variety of badland beasties. One of the game's best features is the player's ability to change characters during combat. If another

A sweet swinging sword will go a long way to vanquish treacherous enemies.

member of the party is better suited to take on a particular enemy, the two adventurers can be easily swapped.

Game data includes the player's Hit Points, enemy HPs, gold, and Experience Points. Hitting the Select button on the control pad brings up the main command menu, which includes weapons, magic, tonic, item, status, save, and change commands. Tonics are potions which restore health or add power. The status menu lists level, experience, gold, attack power, defensive strength, agility and the ability to jump. The save game command

Exile's game format includes an intense RPG-style as well as fighting action.

only works in the RPG scenes and the change option is used to switch characters during combat sequences.

The game is slowed down somewhat by the delay in getting the text on screen. The division between action and role-playing is not seamless. The player is either in an action game or in a role-playing mode and the two formats never seem to quite come together. Action fans may find themselves frustrated by the need to interact with so many characters before they can even leave Assassi. RPG fans, on the other hand, may find the constant action interludes intrusive.

Exile's sound and graphics are incredible. The score has a heroic and cinematic grandeur that gives the game a panoramic quality. The opening scenes which depict the game's cast provide subtle clues for new players as to the characters' strengths and abilities.

The overall art has a strong Japanimation slant. From the initial topdown angled movement of Sadler to the selection of color tones for the desert, great care was taken to utilize the Duo's capabilities. The muted tones of the "Game Over" scene, revealing a man kneeling in front of a hand-made burial marker in the desert, create an appropriately distress-ridden, solemn view.

The playability of **Exile** is high. The user-friendly if somewhat hidebound interface allows novice role-players to quickly access the commands and sub-command lists. The introduction to the game captures the player's interest and sustains it to the very end, when Sadler learns what the Wicked Phenomenon is and defeats it, freeing Baghdad and Assassi from the forces of evil (unfortunately, judging by current events, the spell was somewhat shortlived). Action afficionados will be pleased to discover that the sword action is reminiscent of **Strider**; while RPGers have the security blanket of plenty of stats at hand covering the entire party. **Exile** is a solid, if somewhat schizophrenic program.

— Laurie Yates

Final Fight

PUBLISHER	Capcom
SYSTEM	Sega CD
THEME	Fighting
MEGABITS	N/A
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	6
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	88%
PLAYABILITY	83%

OVERALL 84%

Conquer city crime and corruption with fists and feet.

Capcom has finally brought its premier fighting game to the Sega CD, and this time all of the bells and whistles are intact, along with the full complement of characters from the arcade hit.

The fictional setting of the story is Metro City, "a well known crime capital ruled by violence and death for many years." The CD opens with a very nice cinematic sequence that sets the tone of the work and establishes the basic plot elements. Lasting slightly over three min-

Raw punching power is still the best defense in this bruising street war.

utes, the opening scene establishes that the force behind the crime is a gang called Mad Gear. Mike Haggar, former street fighter champion, has recently been elected mayor on a platform of ridding this element from the streets. In response to his campaign, the player learns, Mike's daughter Jessica has been kidnapped by the Mad Gear. They phone his office and offer her safe return in exchange for his remaining out of their affairs. They also generously offer the same monthly financial stipend the last mayor received to maintain his silence. The sinister consequences of his failing to accept the offer are only implied, but it is obvious to the player that they would be unpleasant. A cut sequence introduces the other two player-characters, Guy and Cody. Cody is Jessica's lifetime boyfriend and Guy offers his aid in the upcoming fight. Each of the three characters have special skills and attributes that individualize play. Guy, a master of Ninjutsu, is the fastest of the three and has a special off-the-wall jump attack

that surprises many of the opponents.

Cody is generically billed as a martial arts expert who is "good with knives." His special attack is a spinning airborne roundhouse kick that is good for clearing

The characters perform some really impressive fighting moves and tactics.

out tight situations (i.e., when opponents have closed in from both sides and are mauling him). He also has a powerful forward snap kick and good punching combinations. The latter works best on Turbo-equipped controllers, such as the ASCII pad. Both Guy and Cody are also capable of flipping or throwing opponents into their partners behind them, provided they start the attack right next to them.

The main protagonist, Mike Haggar, is a master of wrestling skills. A burly 297 pounds, players who prefer Mike are adopting a brawn-over-brains approach. He is a straightforward power character whose punching finesse is limited to straight body blows or an overhead two-fisted slam. On the positive side, he has two special moves, the back drop and the pile driver, which may be initiated by beginning close to the target character, as well as a room-clearing spin move as a special attack.

The characters must fight through areas of the city, as is becoming common with a lot of the fighting games. The areas are: Slum, Subway, West Side, Industrial area and Bay area. Each area is comprised of one or more rounds (equate to levels), with every round having several side-scrolling screens and one or more boss characters. As usual, bonus items are hidden underneath other objects, usually phone booths, trash cans or stacks of tires.

Final Fight has four levels of difficulty, ranging from easy to mania. There is also a timed attack option where one does not move through the area but simply takes on waves of opponents on a single screen. All in all, this provides nothing new or innovative to the genre, but it is faithful to its roots.

— Ed Dille

PORTABLE PLAYTIME

Tesserae

PUBLISHER	Gametek
SYSTEM	Game Gear
THEME	Puzzle/Strategy
MEGABITS	1 MEG
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	74%
PLAYABILITY	86%

OVERALL 87%

Jump those tiles by color and space to come out ahead.

Original strategy games are a rarity in the electronic gaming world, and a new entry is always a cause for joy. **Tesserae** follows in the footsteps of such classics as **Shanghai** and **Ishido Stones** and

If the player is careless, he or she may run out of possible moves and lose.

brings a marvelous new strategic challenge to the Game Gear.

Tesserae is a tough game to describe. The player begins by opting for single-game or tournament mode, and selecting one of the nine available playfield configurations, called mosaics. The simplest is a six-by-eight rectangular grid; the most complex is an x-shaped mosaic. Then choose one of three difficulty settings and start playing.

The object of the game is to clear the mosaic of its tiles in the fewest possible moves. The Tournament mode runs the player through all nine mosaics in sequence.

When play begins, all the grid spaces are filled by tiles representing one of the three primary colors: red, blue, or yellow. Any of these tiles can be moved, jump-style, over any compatible color, to any open or compatible grid space. All primary colors are compatible, as are all like colors. In addition, mating two primary colored tiles transforms the second tile into a secondary color. If a yellow tile jumps to a grid space occupied by a blue tile, the blue tile turns green. Green

remains a compatible color with itself and either of the primary colors which created it.

When a primary colored tile passes over another primary color, the jumped tile disappears. If a primary color jumps over a secondary color, the secondary color is transformed back to its original primary hue.

Confusing as this all sounds, the game itself is remarkably intuitive, and most gamers will be playing successfully before they fully comprehend **Tesserae**'s nuances. The program tracks both the number of tiles remaining and the total moves.

Puzzle and strategy games, as a rule, adapt very well to portable game systems, and **Tesserae** is no exception. Try playing without recourse to the instructions; the game's beauty and simplicity will unfold like a blooming flower, providing maximum enjoyment as the gamer reaches total understanding of the game's rules. However, the detailed instructions show that it's quite a brain teaser in its own right!

— Bill Kunkel

Spider-Man 3: Invasion of the Spider-Slayers

PUBLISHER	LJN
SYSTEM	Game Boy
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	2 MEG
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	5

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	81%
PLAYABILITY	72%

OVERALL 78%

Whoever thought Spider-Man could be so topical?

Invasion of the Spider-Slayers is based on the story of the same name appearing in Marvel's *Amazing Spider-Man*, issues 368-373, in which Alistair Smythe teams up with several well-known Spidey foes to put Peter Parker's alter-ego on the shelf permanently.

Smythe is not the former host of "Mas-

terpiece Theater," he's the son of Spencer Smythe, a brilliant scientist who was once employed by blowhard publisher J. Jonah Jameson to produce a robotic arachnid capable of beating Spider-Man at his own game. Alistair has spent the last few years in an asylum, fine tuning his insanity and plotting revenge on Our Hero. The payback takes two forms: mechanical spiders and old enemies who blunder into the plot line.

The merciless mechanoids come in a variety of shapes and sizes, from an Alien-inspired spider-bot to a titanic, heavy metal tarantula. The classic superheels include Electro, the Tinkerer, the Scorpion, and, of course, Smythe himself, clad in a super-powered exo-skeleton and billed as the Ultimate Spider-Slayer.

The game begins with Spider-Man on his way to New York's Central Park for what amounts to a pre-game workout against a series of garden variety muggers and other petty criminals. Once he's

limbered up, Spidey has to deal with the first of the Spider-Slayers, while legions of the smaller spider-bots begin congregating on the streets below.

Ultimately, the transmissions controlling the robots are tracked to an estate in the New York suburbs, where Spider-Man tackles Smythe himself, his skin now sheathed in a bio-organic carapace that transforms him into a powerful, nearly indestructible foe.

Spider-Man 3: Invasion of the Spider-Slayers plays like a fairly ordinary side-scroller with a couple of cute innovations. For example, Spidey's often-neglected Spider-Sense (as everyone knows, spiders are the most sensible members of the insect world) turns up in the form of a homing instinct which keeps the player going in the right direction. This feature can often prove to be quite useful, especially in the early stages of the game. While first appearing as some sort enemy because of its rapid vertical motion, the Spider-Sense will alert the player as to which path he or she should take next. Other on-screen information includes the player-character's remaining energy (a defensive indicator) and power level (an offensive guide). The game's major weakness, ironically, is its amazingly detailed graphics.

The delicate, fine-line backgrounds often prove visually confusing as Spider-Man moves against it. The trees in the Central Park sequence, for example, render Spidey invisible when he passes in front of them. While this is not a great concern, it can be a little disappointing. Detailed graphics are usually sought after, but when dealing with the limited graphics capability of the Game Boy, simple is generally best.

— Bill Kunkel
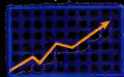
KUNKEL REPORT

## Read This Book!
by Bill Kunkel

Let me make this as clear as I possibly can: if you have sufficient interest in the hobby of electronic gaming to purchase this magazine, you will be doing yourself a major favor by jamming on down to the nearest bookstore and acquiring a copy of David Sheff's superb book, **Game Over (How Nintendo Zapped an American Industry, Captured Your Dollars, and Enslaved Your Children)** (Random House).

Despite the title, this book is neither trendy Japan-bashing nor high-handed philosophizing about how electronic games transform children into zombified assassins. Rather, it is the story of video games, with an emphasis on the Nintendo era, told in the rousing style of a good spy thriller. Beginning more than a century ago, Sheff tracks Nintendo from its humble origins as a producer of playing cards to its present position as one of the great success stories of the multinational era. Each character in the drama is fleshed out, from company founder Fusajiro Yamauchi, to the modern players such as Hiroshi Yamauchi, Minoru Arakawa, and Howard Lincoln.

The book presents its characters as neither heroes nor villains. Some people may be more attractive than others, but the even-handed treatment gives the book an objective quality that it rarely loses, and then unintentionally. For example, Sheff's research into the Atari era was clearly inadequate, relying far too heavily on Nolan Bushnell's interpretation of events for its perspective.

Where **Game Over** really cooks, however, is in its material on the founding and nurturing of Nintendo of America. The saga of the early days of NoA makes for great reading. At one point, in 1980, NoA had ordered 3,000 units of a Japanese coin-op named **Radarscope**. It took four months for the games to arrive by steamship and, when they did, the game was a complete turkey.

Mino Arakawa, the president of the fledgling company, is forced to call his father-in-law, Nintendo's autocratic president Hiro Yamauchi, for help. The only possible solution: create new software to run on the existing **Radarscope** machines. Unfortunately, none of the major Nintendo game designers were
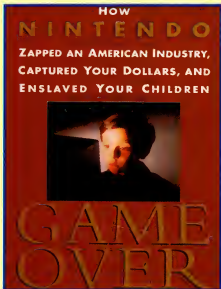
Sheff digs deep into Nintendo's history and their effect on American culture.

available to take on the project, so Yamauchi told R&D guru Gunpei Yokoi to assign it to the new apprentice they've just hired.

"But he knows nothing about video games," Yokoi complains.

The apprentice is Sigeru Miyamoto, a man destined to become the greatest game designer of the modern era (his design credits include the Mario games, the Link adventures, and **StarFox** among others) and the game he creates is **Donkey Kong**.

The story of video games, with an emphasis on the Nintendo era, told in the rousing style of a good spy thriller.

Game Over is crammed with fascinating insights and classic stories: the battle with MCA/Universal over the "Donkey Kong" name; the saga of the **Tetris** litigation and how America became "Tetrisized"; the battle with Galoob over the Game Genie; how Mario got his name; the chip shortage; Atari lawsuit(s); standing up to Sony; Nintendo's purchase of the Seattle Mariners; etc., etc., etc.

The stories of Nintendo's failures make just as good reading as the tally of its successes; the chapter "Sonic Boom" tells the story of Sega's explosion onto the gaming scene, while "Borders" relates the saga of Nintendo's ongoing failure to translate its humongous user base into a modem-based network.

One of the elements that makes this book great is its human touch: stories of epic litigation or technological breakthroughs are always interspersed with telling, personal sketches. Yamauchi, for example, is larger-than-life, as much a captive of Nintendo as its iron-willed leader. When Henk Rogers (founder of Bullet Proof Software and one of the prime players in the **Tetris** melodrama) uses his status as a pretty fair **Go** player to make personal contact with Yamauchi (one of the best players in the world) and obtains the rights to produce a version of the game on the Famicom, he brings Yamauchi a copy.

Yamauchi, who has never before held a video game controller in his hands, struggles for a few moments, then, unable to master the machine that has made him a business titan, leaves the game in disgust.

It's moments like these that elevate **Game Over** from business history status and make it truly great reading. I will even be perfectly honest and say that some of the material in this book was a total revelation to me, especially the Japanese-based stuff.

Game Over is the first book since **Hackers** to qualify as a must-read for anyone with an interest in the electronic gaming phenomenon.

SHADOWMAN © 1993 & TM Voyager Communications Inc.

THE JURY

Ecco the Dolphin sparked a variety of excellent reviews from our readers. Not all gushed over it, though in a couple of cases the game inspired them to wax poetical. We enjoyed all the entries, but when it came to selecting the best reviews, the following edged ahead.

Ecco the Dolphin
Sega
Genesis
One Player

Winning Review
by Dan Thomas MacInnes

Ecco the Dolphin is nothing short of a masterpiece. It is the most original and unique game in years. The plot involves a dolphin whose pod is mysteriously swept away in a storm, and he must travel across the oceans to solve the intriguing mystery.

Ecco gets the unique opportunity to see the wonder of the underwater world.

What makes this game so perfect is that it refuses to be categorized. Early levels involve using strategy in huge mazes. Then it switches gears into action-oriented races across the ocean. The storyline, relying on talking to dolphins, orcas, and other sea life, twists and turns much like quest games. Some levels focus heavily on thinking and puzzle-solving, and then it switches to focusing on reflexes and play control. It is this variety that keeps the player eternally

glued to the TV. The graphics are the only thing that can rival the game play. The artwork uses incredible color and detail to paint scenery that is stunning. From the tropical to the arctic to the prehistoric oceans, the graphics are some of the best ever seen by any system. If nothing else, the smooth animation and the relaxed pace of the game is a wonderful way to relax. Forget SF2, forget Sonic 2, Ecco the Dolphin is truly the best game of 1992.

Runner-Up Review
by Brian N. Pacula

If the plot is this game's hook, the incredible presentation and simulation are the rod and reel. From the opening sequence to the adventure itself, this game is an utter blast. And, best of all, Dolphin is (brace yourself) original.

The game puts you in the role of Ecco, a young dolphin whose family has been swept away by a mysterious tornado. Your search for them will take you to many exotic places.

The game's most outstanding feature is its control—it's fluid, natural, and well executed, and the accompanying animation is tuned to the point where you'll feel every jump, bump and dive. Speaking of animation, there's a spectacular graphic effect with the water—to see it, sing to a fellow dolphin and watch. Singing is a unique, and useful, feature.

Yes, the game does have faults. The

Incredibly detailed graphics help this game move beyond entertainment.

challenge level can go from just right (the Vents) to mega-hard (the Lagoon) without warning. You try to slip between an octopus and sharp coral without becoming Purina Mollusk Chow! Fortunately, you can relax and have fun in some early areas, so the difficulty doesn't really interfere with the game play. For exciting challenge or peaceful relaxation, Dolphin's the one.

PLAYING IT SMART

The Longest Trail
by Joyce Worley

EG went to school, to see MECC's **Wagon Train 1848** in operation, a net-workable program that lets entire class-rooms take the Oregon Trail westward. The Marc Kahre School in Las Vegas assigned 3 or 4 students per wagon train. ("It gets too confusing, too many orders being entered, if they all try to go together," explained Gary Gray, the cur-riculum specialist in charge of the com-puter facility.) The students outfitted wagons, then cooperated with one anoth-er to make the trek, taking shortcuts, laughing at death, and feeding their elec-tronic families through the simple action hunting segments.
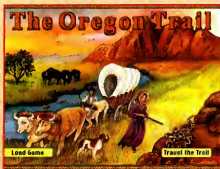
One of the most continuing sagas in the history of electronic gaming concerns America's most arduous migration, The Oregon Trail. Originally designed in 1974 for play on mainframe, **Oregon** was downloaded to classes via the MECC Timeshare System. The program was

Round up your belongings and hit the Oregon Trail, MECC's latest CD release.

redesigned in the 80's for microcomput-ers as **The Oregon Trail**, and still consis-tently ranks in the top ten sales for edu-cational software. MECC introduced **Wagon Train 1848** in the early 90's, a networkable version in which each com-puter represents one wagon, as students cooperate and make group decisions.
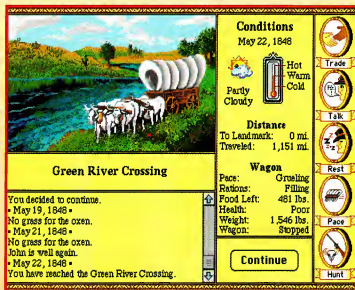
The next stops on the trail came this year: an MS-DOS Deluxe VGA edition, with new graphics, sounds and music, and a Macintosh CD-ROM version with improved and expanded fea-tures, including speech.

Tens of thou-sands of school children travel the electronic trail each year, making this, the oldest educational game, also the most widely played. The new versions make their forays into the West even more rewarding.

The CD-ROM version adds new art, people, and speech. There are nicely ren-dered drawings of landmarks, and por-traits of immigrants, Indians, and other sojourners on the trail. Pleasant voices read descriptions and deliver speeches. Old-time music marks landmarks.

The top third of the main display screen features the wagon jouncing along the trail right to left. Beneath that is the map that traces the wagon's progress, flanked by control icons that permit the player to switch back and forth between descriptive texts, the map, status screen, etc. The player may also go to the Hunt screen at any time (ex-cept when near a populated area). This depicts wildlife dashing onto and off the screen; it's easy enough that anyone can keep their electronic family in buffalo steaks for the entire trek.

This ease of survival is contrasted with random life-threatening occurrences (dis-ease, accidents, snake bites, etc.) It's also disconcerting to be in the desert, with the cattle dying for want of water, and be able to go to a lush wet green

Green River Crossing

You decided to continue.
• May 19, 1848 •
No grass for the oxen.
• May 21, 1848 •
No grass for the oxen.
John is well again.
• May 22, 1848 •
You have reached the Green River Crossing.

Conditions
May 22, 1848

Partly Cloudy

Hot
Warm
Cold

Distance
To Landmark: 0 mi.
Traveled: 1,151 mi.

Wagon
Pace: Grueling
Rations: Filling
Food Left: 481 lbs.
Health: Poor
Weight: 1,546 lbs.
Wagon: Stopped

Trade
Talk
Rest
Pace
Hunt

Continue

hunting area, where wild game may be less plentiful but is still unrealistically available.

The CD version of **The Oregon Trail** significantly advances the game, but unfortunately falls far short of state of the art. The addition of the scenic paint-ings, music, talking guidebook and chatty encounters do help. But live action footage and more scenery variation seem missing. Also missing is any real sense of participation, and that's the biggest difference between this venera-ble teaching product and a state of the art adventure suitable for all-aged play. The game is a great classroom tool, but falls definitely into the educational clas-sification, with small appeal for home players (except for those with an unusual interest in the subject matter.)

Yet, this does not excuse the remark-able history of MECC's creation. It's taught elementary students a few details about the settling of the Old West for almost 20 years, a period of history that best reveals the indomitable spirit of the pioneers. It's a great classroom to learn, and the newly revised versions will keep the wagons rolling in schools all over the country for many years to come.
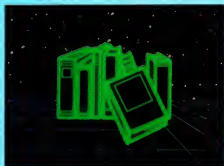
LORE

An Official Player's Guide to Sonic the Hedgehog

Jason Rich, Compute Books, 224 pages (softbound, $12.95)

This authorized hint book covers **Sonic the Hedgehog 1** and **2** in versions for both the Genesis and the Game Gear. It's more than just a run-through on the game play for each cart, though that's certainly what takes up the bulk of its pages. An introduction describes the development and history of the games, including Sonic's selection as Sega's corporate identity icon. A chapter leading off the section on **Sonic 2** covers the events of Sonic 2sday, and following the section on the Genesis versions is a chapter on accessories. In addition to descriptions of several OEM controllers, such as the Turbo Touch 360 and a couple of items from Ascii Entertainment, this includes a discussion of Galoob's Game Genie, with a series of codes for each game. Finally there's a chapter that covers a number of the most frequently asked questions fielded by Sega's crew of game counselors.

Each specific game section begins with an overview of the game (called Preflights for the Genesis versions), things to watch for, like the Special Zones, and the essential goals of the game, such as how to score and what's needed to finally conquer Dr. Robotnik.

The game hints chapters are detailed according to the Zones that Sonic must go through and the three Acts in each Zone. If there is more than one way through the Act, each route is described. This includes how best to overcome the obstacles and Badnicks and which ones to avoid, where to get rings and how to get into the special Secret Zones. Many screen shots are provided at every level.

Irregularly interspersed throughout are boxed hints, titled Sonic Powertips. These can be short recommendations for which alternative routes to take, how best to pass an obstacle or where to

look for a power-up, or one can be a fairly lengthy discussion of some game element or area touching on what can be found there, how best to collect rings or find a secret room, lamp post (**Sonic 1**) or star post (**Sonic 2**), etc.

Any **Sonic** fan should find this book both valuable and interesting.

— *Ross Chamberlain*
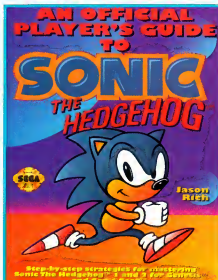
Every secret passage and special trick for Sonic 1 and 2 is revealed for gamers.

Populous: The Official Strategy Guide for Populous & Populous II

Laurence Scotford, Prima Publishing, 216 pages (softbound, $19.95)

Two software companies stand out as creators of worlds in which players wield godlike power over their silicon subjects, Maxis and Bullfrog. Prima Publishing has supported each of them equally. The latest treatise for aspiring deities covers two Bullfrog titles: the original **Populous** and its sequel, **Populous II: Trials of the Olympian Gods**. Some may argue that coverage of the first is not timely; it's

been out long enough for devout players to have already achieved mastery. This overlooks the new audience that exposure to the sequel will generate.

Neophytes and Nimrods alike will appreciate the effort that went into this volume, as well as its modesty. The author rightfully notes that it should not be considered an exhaustive treatment and encourages further experimentation with the promise of discoveries that transcend the scope of the book.

While detailed walk-throughs of the various landscapes are as expected and appropriately treated, the author is more helpful with concepts that build player versatility. An example is a discussion in Chapter One of the strategy of nippling, where raising the elevation of terrain through a series of small bumps forces walkers to build smaller settlements instead of congregating in castles. Castles have distinct advantages later in the game, but they take a long time to build and players are better served through numerous small settlements which produce additional walkers faster to further populate the land.

The book is organizationally sound, divided into a section for each game with appendices discussing developmental histories. Some annoying breaks in the flow of information include asides set off from the main text in blocks with headings like "Did you Know?" These are usually historical or biblical illustrations intended to support the main text. Unfortunately, many are either irrelevant, such as a discussion of the remains of Pompeii, or written in a tone that will appear condescending to more sophisticated readers. Their space could have better been used otherwise. Not all should be skipped; some (such as tips from Bullfrog programmers, "From the Horse's Mouth") contain relevant information.

Overall, the work should be viewed as a mixed blessing of musing and metaphor which succeeds on some levels but fails to live up to its full potential.

— *Ed Dille*

TEST LAB

Convenience Store Wars
by Ed Dille

Barcode Battler
Irwin Toy Company
Under $50.00

This month's entry definitely appears under the sub-heading of "What will they think of next?"

Originally developed and marketed in Japan, the **Barcode Battler** established itself as the latest rage in the land of the Rising Sun. This hand-held unit transforms ordinary bar codes into fantasy heroes, monsters, weapons, special items and the like. Not literally, of course, but the optically coded information is interpreted in ways it was never intended.

The Japanese version of the **Barcode Battler**, on the market for only two years, has already garnered a major market share among middle school-aged children. Statistics show 33% of 9-10 year old boys and 37% of 11-12 year old boys owning a unit. Irwin Toys regularly sponsors tournaments and players are already preparing for the world championships.

What's the source of this appeal, one might ask, and how will it translate in the U.S. market? Break out your hand-held scanner and read on!

The base unit is compact, approximately the size of a one inch thick stack of 5 x 7 note cards. There is a central LCD screen (about 1 x 2 inches) on which all of the "action" takes place. The action, at this stage of development, is pure number crunching similar to early versions of TSR's D&D system. The remainder of play, judging from the over-

seas experience (and Irwin Toys' test marketing in Dallas, Atlanta, St. Louis, Pittsburgh and Hawaii) is that a lot more of the game occurs in the player's imaginations, as they romanticize and fantasize about the exploits of their heroes.

The **Barcode Battler** comes with one set of playing cards. These plastic laminate cards are printed on one side with a graphic of the hero, monster, weapon or special item they represent. On the back is the barcode itself and a text description of the subject. Sliding the card through the optical scanner slot on the machine inputs the barcode data in a format the game can use.

If the card is a warrior, for example, he is rated for Energy, Attack and Defense. Wizards are similarly rated but they also have magic points allotted. After the opposing players are input, special items, weapons and the like are scanned and the battle begins.

The **Barcode Battler** has three separate operating modes, C-0, C-1 and C-2. In C-0 mode, the unit resolves a single battle between opposing barcodes. Each battle is resolved in a series of turns, alternating between the two opponents. For each turn, the player may elect to attack the opponent, use survival points (limited in number per battle) to recover energy, or conduct a magical attack, if one is a wizard. There are ten different kinds of magical attacks, as depicted in the table opposite.

Frankly, the C-0 mode by itself holds little lasting appeal except as a conduit for tournament play. Fortunately, the unit is not limited to that single option. In the C-1 mode, players may chose two cards from the deck, a wizard and a warrior, as their on-screen alter egos. These battlers may be further empowered with one item

card apiece. Once input, the team will compete in a campaign against a series of computer generated enemies. Only by successfully completing this series of battles can the player progress to C-2 mode.

In C-2 mode, one battles a series of 10 "Mega Monster" cards to finish the quest. Completion of C-1 mode is necessary to allow the player to build up enough strength to even begin C-2 mode.

Campaign play is appealing, in that the player must discern which combinations of wizards and warriors work best together (the answers are not always readily apparent), as well as which combinations of moves are most effective against different opponents. Within a given campaign, the card set is designed such that there are optimum combinations the player can discover.

What keeps campaigns interesting over time, however, is the wild card element that is introduced when players input their own barcodes, obtained from any piece of merchandise (including video game magazines). Players will find some cards that, if input as heroes, simplify their quest. Conversely, if one found the original quest too simple, they may be input as monsters to complicate the issue. Discovery and experimentation are the key words here, and one of the major strengths of the product.

Irwin Toys has also developed an excellent marketing plan to keep their product alive in the long run. First, they already have two follow-on card decks in production. Each of these is built around a theme, as in the original, and constitutes a stand-alone quest for players.

The first of these, **Secret of the All Seeing Eye**, features a master villain known as Lord Death, who will be im-

> **What keeps campaigns interesting over time is the wild card element that is introduced when players input their own barcodes, obtained from any piece of merchandise (including video game magazines).**

printed on a hologram collectors' card. Irwin plans to use hologram cards for all of its major characters, even though their production quadruples the expense. Each of the sets of campaign cards will retail for less than five dollars, a tough price to argue with.

The second set is entitled **Halfling Wars** and, along with the **Battler** and other card set, will be available widely before the Christmas buying season.

To those who still remain skeptical of the basic premise, Irwin Toys has two peripherals in the works that may change your opinion. The first of these is the **Barcode Battler Squared** (working title), a stand-alone unit

that will allow up to four of the basic units to be networked for either 2-on-2, 3-on-1 or full melee play. Given that players will remain uncertain about how each will react in a four-way melee, this option adds to the depth of replay value considerably. The unit will also allow two new player-character types, monks and super heroes (or villains, depending on one's point of view). Players may also fight with self generated characters to determine their level on a scale of 1-100.
The **Barcode Battler**

Squared is tentatively slated for release in 1994.

Also in the works is a video game hookup and controller cartridge that will convert the player's favorite barcodes into two dimensional characters for arcade type battles. The most likely company to exploit this technology is Nintendo. Although licensing discussions are still in progress, the prognosis for this merger is quite good.

The SNES cartridge would allow multiples for arms, heads, legs, and the aforementioned attributes, so that every barcode would generate a unique on-screen persona. The unit is also scheduled to appear in 1994 and will be priced accordingly with other video game offerings at the time it appears.

The final factor working in favor of the **Barcode Battler** is additional licensing discussions under way with seven different companies, among them comic book and sports card publishers. If these deals pan out, and the unit achieves a significant enough market share this Christmas through proper marketing, hand-held games could have an entirely different approach by this time next year.

Arcade offerings are great, but a combination of action, strategy and home made heroes is even better.

Number	Points required	Effect/limitations
F0	0	Get some magic points from enemy
F1	2	Increase own attack power (1 turn)
F2	5	Maximum attack power (1 turn)
F3	2	Recover own life energy
F4	4	Recover life energy a lot
F5	3	Decrease enemy defensive power
F6	5	Increase one's own defensive power
F7	4	Decrease enemy's attack power
F8	6	Increase own attack power
F9	3	Prevent enemy use of survival points to increase power-need Only to be used once per battle

Gaming On-Line

Updates & Innovations

This column, which has previously concentrated on one major BBS each month, is shifting focus in the interest of providing a service to our readership that simply doesn't exist elsewhere.

Specifically, *Gaming On-Line* will become the first central clearing-house of major news and upcoming gaming events for all the services currently on-line. Each month, we'll provide coverage of new multi-player games (MPG's), wherever they appear, and updates to interfaces or other features for existing games. Additionally, as tournaments, special events (such as free play weekends) and gaming-specific conferences are scheduled, *EG* will provide as much advance notification of these events as possible. As soon as we know it, you'll know it, without having to use precious on-line dollars to read the postings of every service.

The degree of coverage afforded individual services will vary from month to month, based entirely on how much within our areas of interest that service has accomplished or planned. Reader comments and suggestions are welcome.

Genie

Under the hot new MPG's category, players need to log onto Genie and take a look at **CyberStrike**. The premise of the game is to establish control of a city by eliminating enemy units, placing power centers and fortifying against follow up assaults. Every player controls a biped type robot that may be acces-

sorized by either purchasing add-on modules or salvaging them from combat kills. Players are grouped in teams of four, four teams to a city, for 16 total humans per game. Players do not die; if they get "slagged" by other players they are simply transported back to their starting point in a baseline droid (i.e., all of the modifications they have made up to that point are lost). The interface is smooth and easy to master and the software may be down loaded free.

Other technical improvements on Genie include the addition of a GUI interface for **GemStone III** and an SVGA update file for dedicated Air Warriors. During the month of August, three new fighter planes will be introduced for **Air Warrior** and the main gaming arena will be split into two identical copies of the European and Pacific theaters (pilots will be able to jump between theaters at will). As part of their "Hot Summer Nights" promotion, several of Genie's MPG's will hold free weekends and other events in August. **Gemstone III** is featuring a festival with gladiatorial games, an auction, merchant caravan, lock picking and bard contests, as well as water tunnel races. Every Tuesday night will be a "Welcome to Spur/New Player Night" on **Dragon Gate**, where even experienced players will get their first glimpse of new levels, areas and powers to be added that month. Finally, in celebration of the 578th anniversary of Jan Hus being

burned at the stake for heresy, Genie's version of Jim Dunnegan's **Hundred Years War** game will have a heresy weekend contest August 6-9. The winner of that contest will get many prizes, only to be burned at the stake (vicariously, of course).

Delphi

Delphi has just opened its new modem-to-modem area, which acts as a central clearing house for players who seek head-to-head competition with their favorite off-the-shelf products. Many games are being tested for inclusion, but there are currently seven active, the most popular of which are: **Command HQ**, **Empire Deluxe** and **The Perfect General**. Players may now post their preferences and availability times in Delphi's Game Room.

MPG Net

The MPG Net is conducting **Empire Builder** tournaments in a round robin, elimination fashion. There will be several prizes but the grand prize winner will receive a Practical Peripheral 14.4 bps modem. The only glitch to jumping into competition for this juicy prize is that the game requires a Windows setup with at least 5 MB of memory, a configuration which will exclude a lot of players.

National Videotex

National Videotex Network (NVN) is sponsoring a random drawing among all of its "active" members, the winner of which will receive a free trip to GenCon. Additionally, they have gone live with MPG's role- playing game, **Drakar**, and will have their version of **Hundred Year's War** on line by the time this issue breaks. Finally, they have added a new Mac interface to **Galaxy** and opened a dedicated role- playing forum for pen & paper enthusiasts to meet and play on line.

All in all, there are a lot of things happening on line. Rest assured that *EG* will be there to bring them to you.

—Ed Dille

Delphi brings Empire Deluxe, the classic military sim, to the modem world.

Coming Attractions...

In the September Edition of Electronic Games

Players' Guide to the New Fall/Winter Electronic Games

When the leaves turn color, elctronic gaming busts loose! Hundreds of new video, computer, multimedia and portable games will bombard consumers between October and March. It's tough to tell the winners from the wimps. Our annual preview of the hottest titles lets you know what's coming - and what's worth waiting for!

EG's First Annual Multimedia Entertainment Report

New hardware! New software! New formats! Find out all about the players - or the disks - with this wide-ranging guide to the most explosive segment of electronic gaming!

What's Next for AD&D?

We went to the experts, the game developers at SSI, to find out all about the plans for Dungeons & Dragons. This story tells what's in store for the original role playing game-system this year - and beyond!

And Be Sure to Look For the Very Latest in High-End Gaming, Including:

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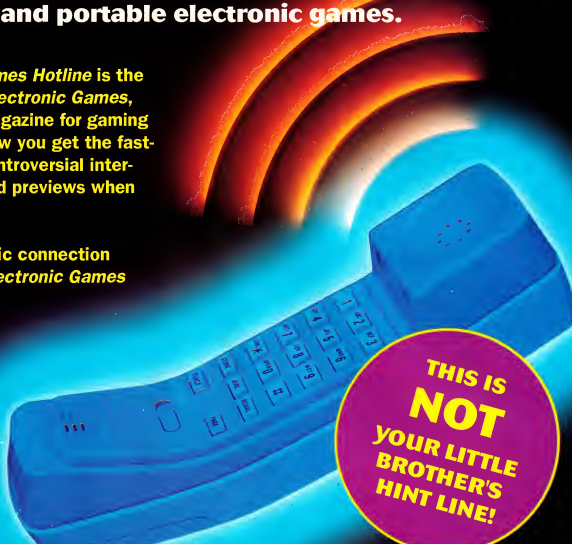# 1·900·903·3309

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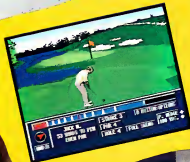
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